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AMERICAN WRITERS SERIES

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Henry David Thoreau

REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS, WITH
INTRODUCTION, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND NOTES

BY

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AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

*New York Cincinnati Chicago
Boston • Atlanta*

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CRAWFORD'S THOREAU

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MADE IN U S A.

PREFACE

The portions of the writings of Thoreau which are included in the present volume are important, either as recording stages in his development, or as illustrating his varying interests. The arrangement, though roughly chronological, takes into consideration other matters than mere dates of publication. Selections from *A Week* come first because of the early date of the experience it records. Entries from the *Journal* are inserted next to works of comparable date, even though the *Journal* has been available to the public but a few years. The three pieces dealing with slavery, of different date, are grouped together, as are the poems.

The Introduction is both biographical and critical, though most of the detailed information relative to dates and events will be found in the Chronology. Attention in the Introduction is concentrated upon the evolution of Thoreau as an author and man, and as a critic of politics, society, and literature.

The reprinting of the excerpts from the *Journal* is by arrangement with the Houghton Mifflin Company, holders of the copyright. The texts of all other works reprinted in whole or in part are those of the original periodicals or of the first editions. For the privilege of making photostatic copies of these originals, I am indebted to the authorities of the Harvard College Library and the Library of the University of Iowa.

In conclusion, I acknowledge my obligation to Dr. Clark, the general editor, for several valuable suggestions, and to my sister for assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

BARTHOLOW V. CRAWFORD

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INTRODUCTION

I GROWTH OF THOREAU'S REPUTATION

Of the few entries on the debit side of the ledger of that sterling American critic, James Russell Lowell, one of the most serious will always remain his depreciation of his contemporary and neighbor, Henry David Thoreau. That so elusive and impractical a thing as Transcendentalism should have stirred his risibilities more than his sympathies is pardonable enough when one considers the natural irreverence of youth, and the way Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was at least of an age for sympathy, had reacted to it. No one can, therefore, feel surprise that to the extent he qualified his admiration for Emerson, Lowell should also have moderated his enthusiasm for Thoreau. But the charge is more serious than this. Lowell from the beginning made the mistake of regarding Thoreau as a mere copy of Emerson. In the *Fable for Critics* he says of Thoreau

"There comes ——,¹ for instance, to see him's rare sport,
Tread in Emerson's tracks with legs painfully short,

¹Lowell's own statement is lacking for a positive identification of the two authors here referred to, and his biographers also are silent. F. B. Sanborn in his introduction to *Poems of Sixty-Five Years* (Philadelphia and Concord, 1902) asserts that the two referred to were Channing and Thoreau. In *The Personality of Thoreau* (pp. 2-3) he fills in the first blank with the name of Channing, explaining that Channing had at the time written two volumes of verse and contributed some prose to the *Dial*. He adds that although the spaces were left blank by Lowell no one in Concord had any doubt as to who was intended. E. J. Nichols, "Identification of Characters in Lowell's *A Fable for Critics*," holds out for Channing as the poet mentioned first, on the ground that Channing's first poetry of importance was published in 1843, whereas Thoreau's poems had appeared in the *Dial* from its launching in 1840. In this arrangement of the names he takes issue with Austin Warren whose article, "Lowell on Thoreau," supports the opposite position. Of three things we may be sure. The two authors alluded to were Channing and Thoreau in one order or the other, the reference to "legs painfully short" could apply to either, and the charge

How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face,
 To keep step with the mystagogue's natural pace!
 He follows as close as a stick to a rocket
 His fingers exploring his prophet's each pocket
 Fie, for shame, brother bard! with good fruit of your own,
 Can't you let neighbor Emerson's orchards alone?
 Besides 'tis no use, you'll not find e'en a core,—
 — has picked up all the windfalls before ”

This is by no means the only charge brought against Thoreau by Lowell. In the 1865 essay he accuses Thoreau of not knowing the human beings he so dislikes, of being lazy, of having no sense of humor. But, disregarding these complaints for the moment, we must concede that in the *Fable for Critics* he had dealt Thoreau a telling blow. By the charge of dependence on Emerson, he definitely delayed Thoreau's arrival at his deserved place in American literature.

The assertion that Thoreau was a mere copy of Emerson was common enough both before and after Lowell made it, and for an ordinary hack critic to have repeated it would have been natural enough. Impressions of this kind sometimes rest on irrational grounds. Such a consideration was the striking physical resemblance between Emerson and Thoreau, mentioned

of imitation of Emerson was one commonly uttered. Lest the term "brother bard" seem inapplicable to Thoreau, it may be pointed out that the prose versions of the Oriental Scriptures which Thoreau had prepared for the *Dial* had appeared unsigned, whereas his poems bore his initials. Warren in the excellent article cited above traces Lowell's depreciation of Thoreau as a mere imitator of Emerson to their first meeting in 1838 when Lowell, a rebellious Harvard senior, was rusticated to Concord for a few weeks before Commencement. Judge Hoar, with whom Lowell there became intimate, disliked Thoreau and, according to Edward W. Emerson (*Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend*, pp. 10-11), turned both Lowell and Longfellow against him. Edward Emerson adds that at the time many other residents were critical of Thoreau as unconventional, irreligious, and unpatriotic. T. M. Raysor, in "The Love Story of Thoreau," finds in Thoreau's Transcendental religious views the reason why Ellen Sewall refused his offer of marriage.

by several contemporaries.² But there were rational grounds as well. For years the two had been closely associated in the Transcendental Club and in the publication of the *Dial*. Thoreau had twice resided for months in the Emerson home. The difference of the ages of the two made it probable that if either were to be the teacher, it would be Emerson who would teach. In general, too, it was reasonable to assume that Thoreau, like any other young man growing to maturity in the neighborhood of one of the most stimulating intellects America has produced, would show the impress of the association. Lowell's charge had thus the merit of plausibility.

Moreover, limited to Thoreau's formative years, and properly qualified, the statement is true enough to deserve the consideration of every biographer and critic of Thoreau. Emerson came to Concord in 1834 when Thoreau was a lad of seventeen, and that year delivered the first of over a hundred addresses at the Concord Lyceum, a very active institution at which Thoreau was a faithful attendant and later himself a speaker. It was but two years afterwards that *Nature* and "The American Scholar" made Emerson one of the most talked-of men in the intellectual and religious world. That Thoreau profoundly admired Emerson at this time and for years afterwards is obvious, not only in the way he was drawn into companionship with Emerson and permitted him to direct his reading, but in the subject matter and tone of his later college essays and his Commencement "part," and in the frank admissions contained in his letters to Mrs. Emerson when his residence in their home was terminated by his removal to Staten Island. The existence of an indubitable influence of the older man upon the younger

²The maturing Thoreau was accused of imitating his master's voice, and even of "getting up a nose like Emerson." His nose, however—braving the charge of lack of a sense of humor—Thoreau inherited from his maternal grandfather, the Reverend Asa Dunbar. The whole question of the relationship of Thoreau and Emerson is well handled by John Brooks Moore in a recent article, "Thoreau Rejects Emerson." See also Bruel, *Emerson et Thoreau*.

is creditable rather than the reverse. The public had not, however, sufficient insight into Thoreau's nature, familiarity with his writings as a whole, or concern over a possible injustice, to rectify this initial judgment. For all practical purposes the damage was done, and Thoreau went through life, ticketed as Emerson's man—a pale, cold luminary reflecting only the radiant glory of Emerson's genius.

Thoreau was, to be sure, not entirely denied recognition in his own day. The group of contemporary notices collected by S. A. Jones in his little volume, *Pertaining to Thoreau*, is far from unkind in general tone when one considers what unusual books these of Thoreau's were, what an utterly original genius—one of the most original to whom America has given birth—he was. There was, in the reception of these works, nothing of the virulence of "Back to plasters, pills, and ointment boxes," or of "This will never do!" American criticism was condemned by Poe in the South and by Margaret Fuller in New York for its disposition to be weakly complimentary to anything creative on this side of the Atlantic, and, in Thoreau's case, though a clergyman might take issue with his preference for certain aspects of Oriental religion to those of Christianity, or a practical-minded writer might find his Transcendental passages 'over his head,' there was a general policy of *nul nisi bonum*. Where Thoreau secured any hearing at all, it was not vigorously unfriendly. By the circle of Thoreau's immediate friends and associates, his works were of course more fairly estimated—by Emerson almost extravagantly so—while in September, 1849, Thoreau was receiving from J. A. Froude the accolade, "there is no man living on this earth at present, whose friendship or whose notice I value more than yours."³ Beyond the disappointment caused by neglect, and the damage done by

³ Froude, then a fellow at Exeter College, Oxford, had just published *The Nemesis of Faith*, an "obnoxious book," burned in the quadrangle by the senior fellow of Oriel College. Froude's letter to Thoreau acknowledges a gift of *A Week*.

Lowell's charge of imitativeness, Thoreau seems to have had little occasion to complain of the contemporary reception of his works

The second charge seriously hampering an adequate appreciation of Thoreau has come from R. L. Stevenson, who owed more to Thoreau of intellectual stimulus than to any other. It is that of being what Stevenson chooses to call "a skulker," a man possessed of purely negative virtues, who had not the courage to face the hazards of life, the supreme gamble—and this because of a lack of red blood, robustness, and amplitude. From Stevenson, "a romanticist, whose sacrifices were all capitalized,"⁴ this charge comes with particularly bad grace, while, in acerbity, it matches that with which Lowell, in his essay on Carlyle, turns back to shatter the idol of his college days. To anyone familiar with both writers, the indebtedness of Stevenson to Thoreau in certain of his most popular essays is simply inescapable, notably in "Æs Triplex," "Crabbed Age and Youth," and "An Apology for Idlers." Indeed Stevenson elsewhere acknowledged "that he supposed he had never written ten words after he had once read Thoreau which would not recall him."⁵

That the charge against Thoreau of social cowardice has found favor with hostile critics is, however, true. Over and over it is repeated in one phrase or another. Curiously enough, in an age of psychoanalysis and of physical explanations for mental unconventionalities, Thoreau has largely escaped the ghoulish activities of so-called scientists. The gentlemen who have during recent years turned in increasing numbers to the study of Thoreau have quite generally deserved the classification and have been content to accept the possibility that one might love Nature without hating mankind, and prefer not to marry without being either a pathological specimen or disappointed in the one passion of a lifetime.

⁴ Canby, *Classic Americans*, p. 204.

⁵ Mark Van Doren (*Henry David Thoreau: A Critical Study*, p. 84) notes also parallelisms between *The Service* and "Æs Triplex," and between *A Week* and *An Inland Voyage*.

The reputation of Thoreau has, indeed, undergone none of the vicissitudes experienced in the case of some more popular contemporaries. Time has dealt severely with some of the literary peerage who used to gather about the board of the Saturday Club at the old Parker House, where Thoreau, invited once as a guest, and repelled by the smoke from expensive cigars, retreated in dismay to the one place in Boston where he always felt at home, the railroad station. Halos are in some cases a bit askew on distinguished brows. But Thoreau, who carried the most of his unsold first published edition to the attic of his father's house (at the urgent request of the publisher), who was condescendingly included by the literary historians among the minor literati of Concord, has quietly gone on acquiring readers and standing until so expert a judge as John Burroughs, critical enough of Thoreau on scientific matters,⁶ can call *Walden* "our first and probably only nature classic" and can say of its author "The best of his books ranks with the best in the literature of his times."⁷

It would have caused a shock in the breast of many of the élite of his day could it have been known that, in a considered estimate in the year 1931 from one of the soberest and best informed of our purely literary critics,⁸ we should find him denominated "a great writer as well as a great man," and even as a "critic of the first rank," and "one of the masters of English prose, purer, stronger, racier, closer to a genuine life rhythm, than any of his contemporaries in England or America."⁹

To this newer critic Thoreau is not a frigid, undernourished

⁶In *Indoor Studies* (pp. 34-35) Burroughs had said, "Hence, when we regard Thoreau simply as an observer or as a natural historian, there have been better, though few so industrious and persistent. He was up and out at all hours of the day and night, and in all seasons and weathers, year in and year out, and yet he saw and recorded nothing new. He has added no new line or touch to the portrait of bird or beast that I can recall. To the last his ornithology was not quite sure, not quite trustworthy."

⁷*The Last Harvest*, pp. 108-109.

⁸Canby, *Classic Americans*, p. 209.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 216.

nature, but a true "Renaissance man," reminiscent of Sidney, Raleigh, Hotspur, and Mercutio, with a joy in sheer living, and the courage to create for himself a life above mere money-grubbing. His characteristics of shrewdness, self-reliance, and independence seem to Canby typical of the best New England has contributed to our national life. *Walden* he names, along with *Moby Dick*, Emerson's *Essays*, Poe's *Poems*, *Leaves of Grass*, and *The Scarlet Letter*, as one "of the six most remarkable books of our single century of national existence."

II FORMATIVE FACTORS GROWTH OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

The important influences at work during the formative years of Thoreau's life seem to have been, stylistically speaking, the Greek and Roman classics and the English poets of the Elizabethan years and the seventeenth century, from the standpoint of ideas, the Oriental Scriptures, Thomas Carlyle, and Emerson himself, from the point of view of living, the more intimate contact with Nature, gradually developing into a consuming passion. All of these strains of influence, or facets of experience, may be, as in this volume, demonstrated in passages selected from his own works.

The youth of Thoreau—for, unlike all the other famous men associated with the village of Concord, Thoreau was a "native son"¹⁰—gave him the boyhood familiarity with wood and lake and stream which made the experience at Walden the fulfillment in part of a long-cherished dream, the adventure in camping-out of a man who never entirely grew up. The years at the Concord Academy, a private school established in 1820,

¹⁰ "Born in Concord, and residing there without a break from the age of six to sixteen, his total absence," says Raymond W. Adams (*Henry Thoreau's Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 6), "after his return from college did not aggregate a year away from Concord during the twenty-five until his death." Emerson came to Concord in 1834, the Alcott family in 1840, Ellery Channing in 1841, Hawthorne in 1842, Sanborn in 1855.

in no way different from those of his school companions, equipped him well along the traditional lines. When he entered Harvard in 1833, he knew Xenophon, Homer, Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, and Ovid, and his college years strengthened this familiarity. Perhaps more than anything else he envied these classic authors their power of expression, their vivid imagery, and arresting diction, and the translations which he made from Homer, Anacreon, Pindar, and Æschylus (two of whose dramas he translated) were part of a serious attempt to attain a like stimulating concreteness in English. Whether or not he had any deep spiritual sympathy with the Greeks is a question. Certainly he wastes no praise on Plato.¹¹

Financial considerations undoubtedly operated to narrow Thoreau's college life and deny him experiences which would have done him good. It was only by the united efforts of his parents, his aunts, his elder sister, Helen, by his own industry and economy, and through some timely assistance from a college fund, that the noisy room on the fourth floor of Hollis was made possible at all. And yet it is more than doubtful whether Thoreau viewed the situation with regret. The article contributed to the *Christian Examiner* for July, 1865, by the Rev John Weiss, who remembered him in college, reveals that Thoreau had nothing to do with the pranks of his classmates, made no effort to enlarge his acquaintance by attending oyster suppers and wine parties, did not contribute to *Harvardiana* (the college paper), did not make a name for himself in any of the literary or scientific societies of the undergraduates,¹² and that his favorite resort was the library, of which he continued to make use all the remainder of his life. Certainly he must have

¹¹ For a vigorous denial that Thoreau was in any sense a "transplanted Greek," see Van Doren, *Thoreau*, p. 98. Norman Foerster in "The Intellectual Heritage of Thoreau" says Thoreau "probably had the vaguest conception of the Platonic philosophy and scarcely knew Plato at all at first hand."

¹² Rev. D. G. Haskins, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1887), pp. 119-120.

spent his time profitably, from one standpoint at least, for Sanborn is authority for the statement¹³ that he "left Cambridge more or less qualified to read and write Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, and Spanish", and developed himself into the best linguist of the Concord group¹⁴ Certainly these, with a knowledge of comparative philology and of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry, constituted an exceptional equipment. He was, however, sufficiently unorthodox in his industry to occasion some question as to his right to retain his scholarship. It is interesting to know that Jones Very, his tutor in Greek, later became one of the Transcendental circle.

Before entering college, Thoreau read right through a standard (Chalmers') collection, *The Works of the English Poets*, and, once college days were over, seems to have repeated the feat. It left him with a great enthusiasm for some of the Elizabethans, and still more for the leading verse writers of the seventeenth century. He may also have been influenced by the reading of another volume, *Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, with Remarks by the late Henry Headley*. Through its pages he might have acquired a more intimate acquaintance with the Fletchers, Daniel, Drayton, Habington, and Raleigh. His preference for Milton over Shakespeare was likely a Puritan inheritance, and based on moral grounds, but his fondness for Donne and Vaughan, Crashaw, Quarles,¹⁵ and Herbert doubtless arose from an affinity of a less logical and more elusive nature. These, along with Daniel and Drayton, were his favorites. To men like Donne and Herbert he was drawn, says Van

¹³ Sanborn, *Henry David Thoreau* (1917), p. 105.

¹⁴ The list of Thoreau's library, printed by Sanborn in the Appendix of the biography cited above, is of great interest as supporting this and other statements as to Thoreau's erudition. See also Foerster, "The Intellectual Heritage of Thoreau."

¹⁵ For a special comment on Quarles see Thoreau's letter to Mrs. Emerson from Staten Island, dated Oct. 16, 1843, *Walden Ed.*, VI, 112-113. (Hereafter in these notes to the Introduction, volume numbers standing alone refer to the *Walden Edition*.)

Doren, "by their sober introspection and intense concentration their more morbid and egoistic element of eccentricity and nervous, crabbed intensity" ¹⁶

Channing says no verse was more often quoted by Thoreau than the lines from Daniel's "Epistle to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland,"—

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!" ¹⁷

which, according to all that we can learn regarding his views on Free Will and the spiritual independence and responsibility of the individual, was both good poetry and good doctrine. Of the influences of these seventeenth-century verse writers upon Thoreau abundant evidence will be found in their frequent appearance among the more than three hundred quotations and citations interspersed in the pages of the *Week*. ¹⁸

Though Thoreau had as a boy a reasonable familiarity with the standard authors of English literature, this did not include either Carlyle or Coleridge, with both of whom he became familiar during college days. Though Thoreau favored no modern writer save Carlyle, the acquaintance with Coleridge was important because he afforded one of the chief points of contact with German Transcendentalism. Subsequently, Thoreau became acquainted also with the writings of Ruskin. Of individual poems, "Lycidas" and the Robin Hood ballads, Channing tells us, were favorites, along with such songs as "Mrs Hemans's 'Pilgrim Fathers,' Moore's 'Evening Bells' and 'Canadian Boat Song,' and Wolfe's 'Burial of Sir John Moore'—precisely the most tender and popular songs." "For novels, stories, and such matters, he was devoid of all curiosity, and for

¹⁶ Van Doren, p. 103

¹⁷ Channing, *Thoreau the Poet-Naturalist* (1902), p. 53

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 253

the works of Dickens he had a hearty contempt. Usually, all the popular books were sealed volumes to him."¹⁹

His enthusiasm for Carlyle was genuine and lasting, though discriminating. The permanent proof of this liking, his essay, "Thomas Carlyle and his Works,"²⁰ was not put together until the sojourn at Walden Pond (1845-1847), at which time he was also occupied with the writing of *A Week*. Carlyle's doctrine of the dignity of labor and its necessary place in the scheme of any well-ordered life, fell in well with Thoreau's theory of physical labor as the best preparation for creative writing. While enterprises like Brook Farm show the Transcendental tendency to a combination of an assigned portion of physical labor with more intellectual pursuits, Thoreau pushes it farther than anyone else to the point of making it a most useful preliminary to composition.²¹ He admired Carlyle for his courage, his enthusiasm, and his stylistic vividness. He was not misled into thinking Carlyle a seer or a dependable literary critic.

When Thoreau was graduated from college in 1837, he faced the necessity of earning a livelihood, while at the same time maintaining his intellectual interests. During college vacations he had taught school, one summer it was the school at Canton, Massachusetts, where he acquired from a new acquaintance, the brilliant Orestes Brownson, the smattering of German which was all he ever attained. This experience made it natural that, after a brief and unsatisfactory experience in the town school, he should join his brother John in the conduct of a private school in the family home. Their advanced educational methods, especially as respected long recesses, tramps over the countryside, and freedom from corporal punishment, made the school popular, and removal to the now vacant academy building a necessity.²² Here Henry took charge of the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 58

²⁰ IV, 316-355

²¹ See his letter, May 19, 1848, to Horace Greeley (VI, 171)

²² One of the pupils who read Greek with Thoreau and spoke enthusiastically of the school in his *Autobiography*, was Senator Hoar

Latin, Greek, French, physics, and mathematics, and here he might have remained, for the school was succeeding, had not his brother's breakdown in health necessitated its closing

The years following graduation were growing years intellectually, but they also marked for Thoreau a precious period of reestablished association with Nature²³ With his brother, of whom he was fonder than of any other human being,²⁴ he made, in September, 1839, the journey down the Concord and up the Merrimack rivers, immortalized in his subsequent first printed book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) Actually, according to Sanborn, who gives an interesting detailed chronology of the trip, it seems to have occupied a fortnight The book omitted some details and added others from subsequent tours "to the Uncanoonucs, Greylock, the Catskills, and Monadnoc"²⁵

"Vague, disjointed, and discursive" the *Week* has been termed by one friendly critic,²⁶ and "almost arrogant in its transcendental egoism" Certainly, the travel narrative is the slenderest of excuses for the long didactic passages which fill most of the pages As a record of what Thoreau was thinking about, it serves much the same purpose as the *Journal* This is not strange, since Thoreau wrote all his books out of his *Journal*, often combining and selecting material written over a considerable period of time One is, therefore, interested to notice among the excerpts reprinted for illustrative purposes

²³ His first experiment at camping out took place during his senior year at college, when he made an excursion of this sort to Lincoln Pond, a few miles from Walden On this occasion his companion was Stearns Wheeler, one of his schoolmates both at Concord and Harvard, whose early death in 1843 is lamented in Thoreau's letters (Salt, *Henry David Thoreau*, p. 22)

²⁴ So persistent was his grief over the loss of this brother that when, twelve years from the date of John's death, he had occasion to speak of it at New Bedford to his friend Ricketson, he paled visibly and gave every evidence of experiencing acute physical pain In this connection see his letter to Mrs. Lucy Brown, March 2, 1842 (VI, 41)

²⁵ Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1917), pp. 223 ff

²⁶ Salt, p. 141

in this volume, passages dealing with his taste for the classics, with the relation of literature and the active life, the relation of the individual to the state, the nature of poetry, in addition to charming nature description, sometimes enriched with an atmosphere distinctly transcendental²⁷ With all its faults—and any Thoreau lover may concede that its failure, judged by commercial standards, was to be expected—the *Week* remains a thoroughly unusual work, and this makes its treatment by so good a critic as Lowell in the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* for December, 1849, the more disappointing Despite its concession to Thoreau of familiarity with his subject, of a pleasant literary allusiveness, and of a style often above criticism, the notice remains condescending and frivolous, scarcely the honest and deliberate judgment which might have been anticipated

Although a few bits of Persian verse, of course in translation, may have found their way into the pages of his college essays,²⁸ and the fragmentary "Godfrey of Boulogne," dating probably from college days, suggests the *Oriental Tales* of Byron, there is no reason to believe that he had done any reading in Oriental literature before the guiding hand of Emerson pointed out its attractions Beginning with August 22, 1838, the first mention of such reading, his interest seems to have increased steadily The pages of the *Week* are evidence of this enthusiasm for things Oriental, but much of his most constructive reading followed the actual trip By 1840 there had grown up in his mind the conviction that not school teaching, but a life as an author was what he wanted The death of his brother provided an excuse for an escape from the schoolroom It threw him back upon himself and upon the consolations of reading As a consequence we find him busying himself with stylistic

²⁷ Cf I, 178-181

²⁸ One paragraph of an essay reprinted by Sanborn in the 1917 revision of his biography of Thoreau (p 127), shows the beginning of an interest, through his citation of some Oriental titles, doubtless acquired second-hand

matters, imitating for the nonce the technique of several masters,²⁹ striving for a manner at once simple and individual, perfectly efficient in the transfer of sensations and ideas³⁰ These two things, a passion for Oriental literature, and an eagerness to write, found opportunity for development during the forties The residents of Concord were just then experiencing intellectual stimulation from two different but related sources One was the Conversations of that "tedious archangel," Amos Bronson Alcott The other was the Transcendental periodical, the *Dial*, founded in 1840 Thoreau was interested in both He set himself a program of intensive reading of the ancients He attended the Conversations He became a member of the Transcendental Club And, most important of all, there began to flow from his pen into the editorial office of the *Dial*, a stream of contributions, both prose and verse

What books he read, in his search for light on Oriental philosophy, were French or English, most of them the latter As Van Doren points out,³¹ Sir William Jones's Oriental poems and "Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations" were printed in the Chalmers' *Poets* which Thoreau had twice read, and the other editors—Colebrooke, Hodgson, Collie, Wilson, and Wilkins—cited by him in the *Dial* prefaces to the selections from the Oriental Scriptures, are all English In leaning thus heavily upon English sources, Thoreau was only doing what his neighbor Transcendentalists were doing Thoreau read French with ease, and seems to have used the Oriental bibles in French translations, but there is every evidence that most of his study was done in his native tongue Recently there has been published a story, *The Transmigration of the Seven Brah-*

²⁹ Van Doren (p 81) calls attention to one of the surviving evidences of this imitation, the last paragraph of the chapter, "The Pond in Winter" in *Walden*, "which moves with many a token of the gait of Sir Thomas Browne"

³⁰ Cf VIII, 419, *Journal* entry for August 22, 1851

³¹ Pp 52-54

mans, which Thoreau translated from Langlois's French version of the *Harivansa* ³²

Previous to 1843 the contributions of Thoreau to the *Dial* do not suggest a preoccupation with Oriental topics "Aulus Persius Flaccus," reprinted in *A Week*, reflects classical reading His "Natural History of Massachusetts" marks his progress on the road leading to *Walden* Even in the number for January, 1843, in which his selections from *The Laws of Menu* appeared, we find also his translation of the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus Three months later, in the April issue, his classical interests are again revealed in the eleven poems translated from the pseudo-Anacreon ³³ In later numbers, however, several installments of selections from the Ethnical Scriptures, and one article, "The Preaching of Buddha," based on Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, all of them unsigned, show his growing interest in the East, and at the same time his willingness to bury his identity in working for the success of the paper His valuable assistance to Emerson, when the latter was editor, has been recognized, and it is even said that the whole of No. 3 of Volume III was edited by Thoreau

In speaking of the subsequent influence of his Oriental reading upon Thoreau one is, of course, as always, on uncertain ground ³⁴ We know that through the remaining twenty years

³² Ed. by Arthur Christy, New York, 1932

³³ It cannot be said that this youthful passion for verse writing, ending at thirty, was encouraged by the public John Weiss, writing his recollections of Thoreau in the *Christian Examiner* for July, 1865 (reprinted in *Pertaining to Thoreau*, ed. by S. A. Jones) speaks of the "unquenchable laughter like that of the gods at Vulcan's limping," which "went up over his ragged and halting lines" In a letter addressed to Mrs. Lucy Brown and dated Sept. 8, 1841, Thoreau says "Just now I am in the mid-sea of verses I am as unfit for any practical purpose—I mean for the furtherance of the world's ends—as gossamer for ship's timbers" (VI, 38-39)

³⁴ An admirable discussion of the influence of Oriental reading upon Thoreau, as well as upon Emerson and Alcott, will be found in Arthur Christy's *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* See also *Emerson and Asia*, by Frederic I. Carpenter

of his life he continued to read, admire, and quote the Oriental scriptures. The handsome library of Oriental literature, sent him in 1855 by his English friend, Thomas Cholmondeley, was given because Cholmondeley knew of Thoreau's persisting interest in the Orient. It was received by Thoreau with great enthusiasm. He says in a letter to his friend Blake, "They are in English, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit. One is splendidly bound and illustrated. I am familiar with many of them and know how to prize them." Incidentally, among the American books which Thoreau sent in return, was *Leaves of Grass* which had come out in 1855.³⁵

In one of the early passages reprinted here from *A Week* he makes a comparison between the Hindoo and Hebrew religions unfavorable to the latter, and this dislike for certain features of Christianity he seems never to have outgrown, though the feeling at no time extended to the founder of our faith. Occasional tantalizing hints scattered here and there in his works have led some to suspect that he had dallied with the Oriental concept of the transmigration of souls. When talking of natural objects he has a fondness for quoting or referring to Oriental writers. The famous "pine tree" sentence, included in the present text, was excised by Lowell from the ending of "Chesuncook" before he printed it in the *Atlantic*, probably because its assumption of sentient life and a possible continuing existence in a mere tree seemed to him sheer nonsense.³⁶ The calmness with which at the last Thoreau viewed the approach of death arose from his feeling that it was "a release of the vital force, a return to Nature."³⁷ And yet there is nowhere in his works any outright acceptance of the doctrine of transmigration. Moreover, as

³⁵ Sanborn says (VI, 272) this was possibly the first copy of *Leaves of Grass* to reach England.

³⁶ From an early conversation with Thoreau, Hawthorne gathered "that Thoreau prided himself on coming nearer the heart of a pine-tree than any other human being" (W. D. Howells, *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, New York, 1900, p. 54).

³⁷ Christy, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism*, p. 214.

Christy points out in the passage just quoted, a veritable chasm separates the Hindoo belief "that the man who has reached a stage of true enlightenment is freed from the consequences of his works" and the doctrine of Free Will and individual responsibility which was fundamental to all Thoreau's thinking.³⁸ He shows, however, an unmistakable fondness for the code of conduct contained in *The Laws of Menu*.³⁹

These evidences of sympathy may easily be extended. Thoreau's emphasis on the value of meditation was definitely intensified by his Oriental reading,⁴⁰ just as Mahatma Gandhi found suggestions for his campaign of peaceful resistance in Thoreau's doctrine of Civil Disobedience.⁴¹ Meditation of course appealed to Thoreau because its practice almost demanded solitude, and because meditation is ideally coupled with the contemplation of Nature. To both of these Thoreau was already addicted.

The intimate and sympathetic relation which Thoreau maintained from the beginning to the Transcendental Club, and to the leading Transcendentalists as individuals, and to the *Dial*, their periodical, would make it natural to class Thoreau as one of them, even if we did not have the passage printed elsewhere

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212

³⁹ Van Doren (p. 95) takes direct issue with any theory of substantial influence from Oriental reading. "He cannot be said to have understood the true significance of the Oriental position, with its stern dualism, its difficult discipline (which in the *Week* he called 'moral drudgery'), its pessimism and its resignation." "I know of no more encouraging fact," says Thoreau in one place (Salt, p. 222), "than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor," and Salt adds, "His religious and moral creed was founded on a fixed optimistic conviction that nature is working to some wise and benevolent end." Or, to quote from his own "Natural History of Massachusetts" (V, 105), "The spruce, the hemlock, and the pine will not countenance despair." The practical faith of all men belies the preacher's consolation.

⁴⁰ Commenting, in a letter to Blake, Nov. 20, 1849 (VI, 175), on the practice of contemplation by the Yogi, he says, "To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a Yogi."

⁴¹ Gandhi became acquainted with "Civil Disobedience" in 1907 in Africa, printed it in *Indian Opinion*, of which he was an editor, and issued it separately as a tract.

in this volume in which he calls himself a Transcendentalist⁴² Thoreau, however, uses the word with a degree of looseness which should excite suspicion, applying it, for instance, to John Brown, whose career as a man of action makes him seem a stranger in such company Thoreau's own positive decision against the Brook Farm and Fruitlands experiments shows that, like Emerson, he held the belief with reservations⁴³ That Thoreau was a mystic, there can be no question, several passages here reprinted having a distinct leaning in that direction The tendency to rhapsody, of which his friend Channing speaks,⁴⁴ is partly of like origin, though influenced also by his love for rhetorical exaggeration,⁴⁵ and by his consuming passion for musical sounds, which calls forth, here and there, passages of an ecstatic nature

What Thoreau learned of Transcendentalism he learned, as has been already said, following an initial impulse from Emerson, through Coleridge⁴⁶ and Carlyle as intermediaries In this he resembled all the other important Transcendentalists except Theodore Parker, who read Kant Thoreau never mastered

⁴² Cf. *Journal*, XI, 4, March 5, 1853 Adams (*Henry Thoreau's Literary Theory and Criticism*, pp. 52, 62) cites an additional passage contained in a letter written to Charles C. Morse in 1860 in which Thoreau says somewhat whimsically, "I am in the lecture field, but my subjects are not scientific, rather Transcendental and æsthetic" Then, in the following sentence, he puts into it still another shade of meaning "I devote myself to the absorption of nature generally" In a letter to his sister Helen, dated July 21, 1843 (VI, 97), he says of an address by Lucretia Mott, "Her subject was 'The Abuse of the Bible,' and thence she straightway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman It was a good speech—Transcendentalism in its mildest form" See also opening pages of Foerster's "The Intellectual Heritage of Thoreau"

⁴³ In the words of Van Doren (p. 44), he "opposed Fourierism because it asked men to stand propped against one another rather than planted, each one firmly, in the eternal"

⁴⁴ Channing, p. 125

⁴⁵ Cf. passage in letter to Harrison Blake, April 10, 1853 (VI, 220, quoted by Channing, *ibid.*, p. 243), beginning, "I trust that you realize what an exaggerator I am."

⁴⁶ A striking parallelism in thought is to be noted between Coleridge's "On Sensibility" in *Aids to Reflection* and Thoreau's intellectual position

German as he did French, and read what he read of German literature largely in translation. Zimmerman's *Thoughts on the Influence of Solitude on the Heart*, a work which may have stimulated him in his plans for the Walden experiment, he read in this way. Goethe, to whose works he must have been early introduced by Emerson, and through his own reading of Carlyle, he never liked, and scarcely mentions after 1840. Novalis, with whom he was familiar through the pages of the *Dial*, and through Carlyle's essay, Thoreau seems to have admired. With Novalis he shares a liking for night, but the parallelism in taste is without significance, since Thoreau shows an even greater passion for the morning hours. The acquaintance of Thoreau with German literature was thus not extensive. In so far as he was influenced by German transcendentalism it was in the version transmitted by Coleridge and Carlyle, and modified by the Oriental reading of the Concord circle. It is doubtful if Thoreau, had he been asked, would have acknowledged any important debt to the philosophical thought of Germany.

Transcendentalism⁴⁷ as it flowered in America is marked by the Puritanical soil in which it developed, with a greater emphasis upon conduct than in Germany, and a stress upon the brain rather than the heart, upon thinking rather than feeling.

Two aspects of Transcendentalism were especially significant to Thoreau. The first was the stress which it laid upon solitary communion with the Infinite. Here it was in agreement with his natural impulses and with all his reading in Oriental literature. The important place Wordsworth gave it in his practice and in the pages of his verse also was an encouragement. All the Transcendentalists believed in the ecstatic moment, though Thoreau attained no closer resemblance to the well-defined trances of Alcott than his occasional rhapsodic passages record. The second aspect of Transcendentalism of great importance

⁴⁷ See Emerson's lecture, "The Transcendentalist" (*Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Centenary Edition, Boston, 1903, I, 335-336) for an authoritative definition of the term.

to Thoreau was the assurance it afforded him that what his intuition, his Quaker-like "inner light," told him was right, *was* right. This doubtless stiffened his back in many an unconventional moment, and played its part in making him ready to speak about slavery, when the time came, at Framingham and Concord.

III ADVENTURING ON LIFE

The plan of withdrawing from close association with men in order to become better acquainted with Nature, and at the same time of completing some long-deferred literary tasks, must have appealed to Thoreau's Yankee instincts as a happy combination of objectives. The desirability of communion with Nature was one of the few articles of faith in which all Transcendentalists agreed. Instead of indulging in mere theory, Thoreau would be putting his belief into practice. At the same time he would be doing what he longed most to do. College had broken into the outdoor life to which Thoreau had been accustomed as a boy, and the old contacts had to be reestablished. At Harvard, Audubon⁴⁸ had inspired Thoreau's generation as Agassiz was to inspire a later, and Thoreau was only waiting an opportunity to begin the nature observation to which his master had encouraged him. Although he had a long way to go, Thoreau already had in him the essence of that love for Nature which Alcott was to pronounce "the profoundest passion for Nature of any one living", which made his face, when walking in the woods, shine with a new light. Addressing his *Dial* audience in 1842 in the "Natural History of Massachusetts," we find him taking a rather evangelistic tone. Nature is wholesome and health-giving, the "spray from the wood" or "crystal from the brook" has a salute and a response to all your enthusiasm and heroism.⁴⁹ There is nothing of that extremity of devotion

⁴⁸ Cf. opening sentence, "Natural History of Massachusetts," V, 103

⁴⁹ V, 125

which leads him to say of himself in 1852,⁵⁰ "If I am too cold for human friendship, I trust I shall not soon be too cold for natural influences." Perhaps, however, people were already saying of him as Madam Hoar did, "Henry talks about Nature just as if she'd been born and brought up in Concord."

So early as December 24, 1841, his *Journal* records his desire to escape to a solitary retreat, so also a letter from Margaret Fuller in the same year.⁵¹ Sanborn thinks that the spot then being considered was the Hollowell Farm, mentioned in the second paragraph of the second chapter of *Walden*—a retired spot fronting on the river, which had caught his fancy when as a boy he was making his way up the stream to Fairhaven Bay. How he escaped from the purchase of this farm is amusingly narrated in the *Walden* passage already referred to. The idea of a "shanty" in the woods doubtless came to him after a college classmate, Stearns Wheeler, later a Greek tutor at Harvard and a contributor to the *Dial*, had built one on Flint's Pond. Channing is authority for the statement that Thoreau visited Wheeler there for six weeks, and that he (Channing) also called there.⁵² The exact location of the Walden cabin, in what Sanborn says "was anciently a place of dark repute, the home of pariahs and lawless characters,"⁵³ with the road to Lincoln on his left and the Fitchburg railroad on his right, Thoreau has described in as much detail as the construction of the cabin itself.

Of his practical aims, Salt has said, "There is not the slightest indication that Thoreau was thinking of an 'entire independency of mankind', he was simply adopting a more independent way of living than that which custom enjoins. It was a time of self-probation rather than an attempt to influence others. . . he was under thirty years of age when he went to Walden, had

⁵⁰ Entry for April 11, IX, 400.

⁵¹ Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1882), pp. 208-209.

⁵² See note, *Familiar Letters*, VI, 58-59. On March 5, 1845, Channing wrote Thoreau, urging him to build himself a hut (VI, 121).

⁵³ Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1882), p. 202.

published no volumes, and was altogether unknown except to a limited circle of his fellow-townsmen. On the other hand it must be noted that this was the time when his thoughts ripened, and his ethical creed assumed a definite form. ⁵⁴

Misapprehension as to the thoroughgoing character of his separation from society has gone hand in hand with an assumption that Thoreau was somehow dedicating the remainder of his life to the experiment. Both impressions, even though given currency by so good a critic as Lowell, are erroneous. In the testimony of intimate acquaintances some disagreements arise. Channing would have the hut at Walden a sort of bivouac, and home his real residence. Sanborn, on the other hand, says "he was sometimes secluded in his hut for days together." These and others agree, however, that Thoreau was fond of his mother's cooking, and George William Curtis adds that he often took Sunday dinner with the Emersons, and stopped for supper at the Hosmer farm. ⁵⁵ Nor is there the least uncertainty as to his reasons for terminating the experiment. In his own words, "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one." ⁵⁶ He went from Walden to reside at the Emerson home during his friend's absence in Europe, and then, a year later, when Emerson had returned, back to his room in his father's house. ⁵⁷

On this point Stevenson is fairer to Thoreau than Lowell, and this despite the fact that he had not had the opportunity afforded Lowell of personal contact. Stevenson understood

⁵⁴ Salt, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁵ See Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1882), pp. 210-212.

⁵⁶ II, 355, see Selections following, p. 164.

⁵⁷ See Sanborn, *op cit*, p. 214, for narrative of the subsequent fate of Thoreau's cabin. The little building, well represented in the sketch by Sophia Thoreau in the first edition of *Walden*, was first moved to the bean field, where it was occupied by a Scotch gardener, Hugh Whelan, and then, some years later, to a point three miles to the north, where it served as a granary, and eventually rotted to pieces.

and correctly interpreted the aim of Thoreau in the Walden experiment. Instead of labeling it an evidence of an unhealthy attitude toward human society, he points out its purpose, to prove "that a man may pay too dearly for his livelihood," and to achieve certain ends, whereupon, having achieved them, "he showed the same simplicity in giving it up as in beginning it."

The resulting book, *Walden*, by far the best known of Thoreau's works, and popular—at least within reason—from the first, is much more than a record of his residence at the pond. In its pages are passages drawn from his journals as far back as 1838, from the "Red Book," which covers the period from October 22, 1837, to June 11, 1840, and from its 396-page successor. The actual thing seen, Thoreau could not detach from his own inner associations, and this is one reason why, though a member of the Boston Natural History Society, he declined to write memoirs of his experiences for their records. He was profoundly interested in the scientific side of what he saw and heard, in the observation of phenomena, and the collection of data. He had also the instincts of a story-teller, and contrived to give to some sections of his book a Crusoe-like quality which appeals to the young on whom the remainder is wasted. But what Thoreau saw and experienced was forever a temptation to reflection and digression, and it is these moments which are probably most prized by his mature readers. Sometimes the treasured portions are the pieces of social criticism in which, with a charming disregard of the practical, Thoreau tells us what fools we are in our emphasis upon nonessentials. At other times it is the mood sketches in which he phrases with incomparable beauty the feeling which comes over one on a bright Spring morning when it seems that "all men's sins are forgiven," or upon hearing the voice of a robin "at the end of a New England summer day." No scientist, Thoreau is for the world at large something unique and different, and perhaps more precious, the nature observer with a poet's heart.

Written at a time when Byronic Titanism and despair still lingered among the younger generation in America as well as in England, and showed itself in an occasional rebellious poem by as cheerful a soul as Whittier,⁵⁸ Thoreau's masterpiece exhibits nothing but optimism. His *Walden* is, what Burroughs calls it, a delightful piece of "brag." On the title page of his manuscript of *Walden*, above the quotation from Sâdi counseling obedience to Nature, and beneath the rude drawing of Chanticleer, he has written, "I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as Chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors."⁵⁹

IV. POLITICS AND ABOLITION

There is something superficially arresting in the spectacle of a poet-naturalist like Thoreau, who seldom attended a town-meeting if it could be avoided,⁶⁰ taking a vigorous and courageous part in the agitation for the abolition of slavery. And yet, as is usually the case in these character surprises, there need have been no surprise at all.⁶¹ Like Emerson, Thoreau came of liberty-loving ancestry, like Whittier, he had not had the experience, possible in richer and more metropolitan centers, of hearing slavery condoned from the pulpit. Even before Thoreau went away to Harvard, a society, organized among the women of Concord, for the suppression of slavery, had included close friends of the Thoreaus. Thoreau's mother, too, was sympathetic. A decade later, Wendell Phillips made in Concord the first of three violent attacks on a Constitution which permitted slavery. That Thoreau had no need to be converted

⁵⁸ Cf. the unfamiliar note of bitterness in "Among the Hills."

⁵⁹ See *Walden*, chap. II (II, 94).

⁶⁰ Channing, p. 274.

⁶¹ Even Transcendentalism itself had as one of its tenets belief in the brotherhood of man, and almost all the Transcendentalists became ardent Abolitionists.

to the cause is shown by the fact that as Secretary to the village Lyceum, he wrote to the *Liberator*, a letter, dated March 12, 1845, and printed under the title, "Wendell Phillips before the Concord Lyceum." The conditions which called forth his first important pronouncement, "Civil Disobedience," printed in 1849 in Elizabeth Peabody's *Æsthetic Papers* under its earlier title, "Resistance to Civil Government," were substantially those which brought out the first series of *The Biglow Papers*—a dislike of the aims of the Mexican War, both immediate and distant. Like Lowell and many other New Englanders, Thoreau feared the growing slave power, and deplored the imperialistic objectives of the war with Mexico. The date of the essay is significant because it shows that, as compared with Emerson, Thoreau had come earlier to a decision as to his own attitude. Indeed it is questionable whether Thoreau ever had to make up his mind in the matter, whereas it took the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the Seventh of March speech of Webster to stir Emerson to the red-hot oath, "I will not obey it, by God!"

To the people of Massachusetts, the operations of the Fugitive Slave Law brought home as nothing had up to then the real nature of slavery, and quickly raised a storm of opposition. That a state whose own constitution did not provide for slavery must assist, or at least stand by and permit, the return of slaves to their owners in other states, when, as was sometimes the case, they had established residence and citizenship in Massachusetts, presented an issue over which there was hot dispute. The immediate occasion for trouble was the case of Anthony Burns, which had caused great excitement during May and June in and about Boston, with a riot and attempted jail-delivery. The recollection of a similar case, that of Thomas M. Sims, but three years before, left in everyone's mind the feeling that trouble was likely to increase rather than to subside. In such an atmosphere, Thoreau delivered his stirring address, "Slavery in Massachusetts," on July 4, 1854, at the Anti-Slavery Convention at

Framingham So much did William Lloyd Garrison think of it that he printed it entire in the *Liberator* for July 21

These two productions from the pen of Thoreau showed that he was no mere follower in abolitionist agitation, that he had unquestioned courage, and that he could command a respectful hearing from his fellow-men

That his actions were as decisive as his words is shown by the practical assistance he offered, on at least two occasions, to escaped slaves on their way by the underground railroad to Canada, secreting them, and smuggling them aboard trains under the eyes of secret agents Any question of his courage which may have remained must have been removed following his meeting with John Brown, which occurred in March, 1857 "A big fellow in his fifties, round-shouldered, grizzled, rough-hewn, with the rugosity that went with the frontier type, That mouth like a sabre cut, the metal of those eyes, that stiff, projecting hair planted thick over the low, determined brow, those perpendicular wrinkles between the eyebrows, "—thus vividly has Brown been described by a recent French author⁶² Just what the basis of sympathy was between these two men, so unlike physically, intellectually, culturally, is not at once apparent But Thoreau saw in Brown a man with a background of New England ancestry, as earnest as himself, and as careless of the proprieties of respect for a kind of government of which he disapproved Likely Thoreau knew nothing of what were really revolutionary plans on Brown's part, and certainly he was unaware of the unmistakable strain of insanity in his ancestry, and the practical irregularities of conduct which had studded his long and colorful career At any event, Thoreau became, with Emerson, his sponsor and ardent supporter in Concord, and when, following the raid on Harper's Ferry, October 16, 1859, Brown was captured and tried, and sentence

⁶² Bazalgette, *Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Nature*, pp 304-305 See also F. B. Sanborn, *Memoirs of John Brown*

to execution was assumed as inevitable, it was Thoreau who summoned his neighbors to a public meeting of protest, to be held Sunday evening, October 30, announced himself as the speaker, and, despite all the protests of more cautious friends, delivered the stirring "Plea for Captain John Brown." Thoreau had no expectation of being able to save Brown's life. He regarded him, he says, as already, to all intents and purposes, dead. He wished merely "to celebrate the beauty of his character and his act."⁶⁸ Nor was he content with speaking once. He would have gladly spoken in Worcester, and all over New England. Once more he actually did speak, in Boston, at Tremont Temple, two days afterwards, and to a tense and sympathetic audience.

Viewed from the safe distance of three-quarters of a century some of the enthusiasm and indignation appears shortsighted and over-zealous. Today Webster is being re-appraised, and men are not quite so ready to charge him with cowardice or sacrifice of his country to his personal ambitions. Brown looks, perhaps, more of a pathological case than he once did, more properly a subject for a sanity commission than for a public execution, but all that has little to do with the estimate we must put upon the conscientiousness and courage of the man who rose in the town hall at Concord to defend him. This last public chapter in the career of Thoreau effectively answers any charge that he was a skulker, that he shirked his responsibilities as a citizen or as a man.

V. SOCIAL LIFE

Of his fondness for travel, his books afford substantial evidence. His several journeys to Cape Cod produced a book which has been praised for its humor, its sunny kindliness. His journey to Canada did not result so happily, though an

⁶⁸ Bazalgette, *op cit*, p. 320

excerpt reprinted here shows him in an attractive light in his respect for and sympathy with a religious faith unlike that in which he was baptized by old Dr. Ripley. The journeys to neighboring mountains are more briefly recorded. In Maine, where the Thoreaus had relatives, he was especially interested, but for a different reason, his passion for Indian life. Of the deep-seated nature of this there can be no possible question.⁶⁴ Joe Polis, the Indian guide who piloted him on his last expedition, he valued as one of the most interesting men he knew. As indicated elsewhere, Thoreau was busy for years collecting Indian lore with a view to writing sometime a book on Indian life. It never took form.

During much of his life Thoreau was far more occupied with practical matters than one would gather from the superficial generalizations of some of the critics. Ever since the years when he was growing to manhood, Thoreau had assisted in the family industry, the manufacture of pencils. Everyone has heard at some time or other how Thoreau resolved not to go on making pencils once he had made a perfect one.⁶⁵ Whether or not he ever made the remark, the real reason for ceasing the manufacture of pencils was a different one. The plumbago produced found a more profitable market in the electrotyping industry, and the factory consequently continued in operation. When Thoreau's father was stricken with his last illness, the responsibility fell on the only surviving son. The annual income of \$1200 to \$1500 had of course to be maintained, with Sophia and her mother, as well as Henry himself, to be considered. Thus Thoreau was more and more tied down in what must have been a decidedly unhealthful atmosphere, for the powdered plumbago from the adjoining shop permeated the

⁶⁴ Adams (*Henry Thoreau's Literary Theory and Criticism*) has counted no less than one hundred sixty-six journal entries referring to the Indian race.

⁶⁵ Channing (p. 326) says Thoreau never made the remark, and made pencils long after he was reported to have said it.

house The correspondence he carried on with Horace Greeley, who acted for him in negotiations with publishers, and was his adviser in such matters, makes it clear that a few hundred dollars per year at the most was all he can ever have derived from authorship⁶⁶ Before the shop claimed his time, he did considerable surveying, and thought it not ignoble to work at any odd jobs about the community⁶⁷ When boarding at home he was careful to make an adequate return in labor or cash Thoreau was, in short, no loafer and no parasite He secured the leisure he coveted for his daily walks by a resolute elimination of what he regarded as nonessential in expenditure, not by dodging legitimate responsibilities He paid his way

Thoreau has written much on the subject of Friendship, and, if one is to judge from what he has said, set a very high standard of understanding between friends In the *Journal* entry for December 21, 1851,⁶⁸ he intimates that no explanations are ever necessary between friends unless they be estranged, but in the earlier entries for November 16 and 24, 1850,⁶⁹ appears to have experienced frequent misunderstandings Clearly he was neither easily pleased nor disposed to go far in search of a common denominator either physical or mental Channing has told us that if on a journey a "companion was footsore and loitered, he steadily pursued the road"⁷⁰ And yet Channing, with whom he had much in common,⁷¹ who knew him better than anyone else, says of him, "let it be said for ever that there was no affectation or hesitancy in his dealing with his friends. He meant friendship, and meant nothing else and stood by it

⁶⁶ Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1917), p. 280

⁶⁷ In a letter to Harrison Blake, Dec. 19, 1853 (VI, 222), he says. "If it is surely the means to the highest end we know, can any work be humble or disgusting?"

⁶⁸ IX, 146 See also his letter to Emerson, Feb. 12, 1843 (VI, 56-57)

⁶⁹ VIII, 98, 109

⁷⁰ Channing, p. 6

⁷¹ Channing, nephew of a Unitarian minister who was a university professor, rebelled, like Thoreau, against restriction, would not finish his university course, and had been living, just previous to his coming to Concord, in a log hut in Illinois

without the slightest abatement ”⁷² In proof that this feeling was reciprocated, Thoreau said of Channing in a letter dated March, 1856, “I am rejoiced to hear that you are getting on so bravely with him and his verses. He and I, as you know, have been old cronies,—

‘Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill,
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared—’ ”⁷³

For Alcott also, Thoreau seems to have had a high regard,⁷⁴ though repelled by what he regarded as fulsome praise.⁷⁵ His friendships with Harrison Blake and Daniel Ricketson are both sealed with extensive and intimate correspondence. Hawthorne, who liked few people, admired Thoreau. Emerson in his *Journals* refers more often to Thoreau than to any other one man (Burroughs finds ninety-seven paragraphs in Emerson’s *Journals* referring to Thoreau),⁷⁶ and, although the two drifted apart as Thoreau grew into an independent, self-sufficient thinker, Emerson’s parting references to him are uniformly sweet and affectionate. With Greeley, Thoreau was on terms of pleasant intimacy, Greeley at one time inviting him to take charge of the education of his children. Whitman he met, respected, and liked. Writing to Harrison Blake of him, December 7, 1856, Thoreau says of *Leaves of Grass*, “On the whole it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. Since I have seen him I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book.”⁷⁷ By some of the sexual frankness in *Leaves of Grass* he was of course repelled, though not in resentment at Whitman, but at the prudery which makes us thus capable of being shocked. He believed Whitman thoroughly wholesome, and would have been glad to entertain him at his home. Thoreau was thus totally devoid of narrow

⁷² Channing, p. 31

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 186–187

⁷⁶ *The Last Harvest*, p. 20

⁷³ Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1882), p. 181

⁷⁵ Channing, p. 308

⁷⁷ See also VI, 290–291, 295–296

conventionality in the making of friendships. Of those he knew well only a small part have been named. Obviously what he has said about Friendship and his deficiencies and disappointments must be taken only in a qualified and limited way. As Channing once remarked, Thoreau was really exceptionally gifted in attraction for people about him. On his walks, though reluctant to take chance acquaintances,⁷⁸ he was a charming companion. With Edward Hoar and other younger friends he was a great favorite. Only because his goal was so high, only because he had for Friendship an ideal beyond human attainment, had Thoreau any grounds for disappointment.

VI THE SOCIAL CRITIC

If the passing years have brought Thoreau a larger audience, the explanation is to be found in the increasing timeliness and applicability of his social comment. Our mechanical inventiveness, generally regarded in Thoreau's day as one of the most characteristic and admirable of American qualities, has had its way with the American industrial system. The shelves of our stores and warehouses are loaded with machine-made products, and we shall soon be residing in houses not made with hands. In that still-remembered golden era of expanding trade and accumulating wealth to which the mid-nineteenth century looked confidently forward, the voice of Thoreau attracted hearers by its very novelty. Today we have time to speculate over the possibility that Thoreau after all may have been right.

Thoreau's dislike for mere "business" is revealed in his Commencement part, wherein he opposed his fellow townsman, Henry Vose, in a discussion of "The Commercial Spirit." The eagerness to amass wealth, he termed man's ruling passion, blindness to the loveliness of surrounding nature, his besetting sin. He also sounded thus early a note characteristic of most

⁷⁸In this connection see his letter to Blake, May 21, 1856 (VI, 281).

radical social reformers—the necessity for the readjustment of the proportion of labor to leisure. Said he, with characteristic exaggeration, “the seventh should be man’s day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, and the other six his Sabbath of the affections and the soul.”⁷⁹

Early in his career as a writer he prepared a review of the second English edition of a work by one J. A. Etzler, *The Paradise within the Reach of all Men, without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery*. In a letter to Emerson, Aug. 7, 1843,⁸⁰ he speaks of receiving back from the *Democratic Review* a long article on Etzler’s book. A month later, Sept. 14, he records its acceptance. This review, reprinted in part in the present volume, has for a modern reader the same interest as attaches to that extraordinary prophecy by Edward Bellamy, published a few decades later, entitled *Looking Backward*. As H. S. Canby has recently remarked, “There is not one of his [Etzler’s] descriptions of machine power quoted by Thoreau in his review that has not by now been fully realized. All the man lacked was specific knowledge of processes, all that is wrong in his scheme is the time element (ten years instead of a century), and his guess at the result for the human race. We are not so happy nor so comfortable as he thought.”⁸¹

With certain aspects of Etzler’s book, Thoreau shows a lively sympathy. Thoreau’s own adventurous spirit responded to the author’s expressed resolution to conquer all natural obstacles. His Yankee ingenuity and mathematical training made him an interested, if also a skeptical, critic of the mechanical devices and elaborate calculations with which Etzler’s pages are filled. One cannot read the passages in *Walden* in which reference is made to the railroad which was Thoreau’s close neighbor without realizing that, despite all his grumbling, he liked it.⁸² The locomotive, battling against the snows of a New England winter,

⁷⁹ VI, 9

⁸¹ *Classic Americans*, p. 205

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 102, 107

⁸² II, 129–130

hurrying the products of soil and factory from one section to another, was a visual illustration of the adventurousness of Commerce, of its "enterprise and bravery"⁸³ Almost the whole of Thoreau's life was spent in the village in which he was born, yet his interests were astonishingly national Reference has been made elsewhere to his fondness for books on geography and travel Reading matter of this kind stimulated his imagination For a New Englander he was exceptionally aware of the nation stretching to the west beyond the Alleghanies "Literature," he writes, "speaks how much still to the past, how little to the future, how much to the East, how little to the West,—

In the East fames are won,
In the West deeds are done"⁸⁴

This feeling of interest in the West he took the trouble to disavow in a letter to Harrison Blake, Feb 27, 1853,⁸⁵ but it is nevertheless true that the last considerable journey he made was the longest, and westward in direction When the fatal illness had already fastened its clutches upon him, he left his home, and, with only a boy as a companion, undertook the arduous expedition to Minnesota, with something of the old spirit of adventure

But in the consideration of the more general subject of trade, Thoreau has little good to say The pursuit of wealth, he regarded as a form of enslavement,⁸⁶ and a mere postponement of death The undeniable advances of civilization have been gained at a huge cost,⁸⁷ and have left a large part of our population still as degraded as savages⁸⁸ In a letter to his friend

⁸³ *Ibid*, 131-133 Emerson shared this admiration for commerce

⁸⁴ IV, 346 For confession of his involuntary tendency to walk westward, see V, 217, Selections following, p 318 See also his letter to Mrs Lucy Brown of July 21, 1841 (VI, 36)

⁸⁵ VI, 210

⁸⁶ See *Journal* entries for Jan 20, 1856 (XIV, 120), and Oct 22, 1853 (XI, 444-445)

⁸⁷ II, 164-165, 227-228

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 38

Blake, written on Nov 16, 1857, in a year of numerous bank failures and general depression, Thoreau calls attention to the oft-repeated statement that ninety-seven out of every hundred business men fail,⁸⁹ and terms it "perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed." Exhibiting a not unnatural disposition to gloat over the scoffers at Transcendentalism and at idealists in general, he reminds them that the one type of institution previously regarded as the acme of solidity has failed, whereas "the moonshine is still serene, beneficent, and unchanged."⁹⁰

The feeling expressed with such acerbity did not, however, arise from any lack of interest in the very exciting and very practical business of living. On this subject, he insists nothing worth while has yet been written.⁹¹ The old, he tells us, in language closely imitated by Stevenson in a famous essay, have for the young no advice worth attending to.⁹²

No suggestion is so often uttered and so vigorously pressed by Thoreau as that the way out of the slough in which our civilization flounders lies through simplification. Many a skeptical and unconvinced reader has been amused by the pages of *Walden* in which Thoreau condemns furniture as an encumbrance,⁹³ groans over the oriental luxury of our railroad cars,⁹⁴ and argues as to the exact amount of shelter really necessary.⁹⁵ While it is probable that, as usual, Thoreau is overstating his case, his *Walden* experiment was at least a substantial attempt to put these theories into practice. At the same time, these details in living were urged by Thoreau chiefly as symbols of a deeper weakness in our whole industrial and social system. We have made the vital mistake of putting our trust in material progress as though the nation were to be saved by its many

⁸⁹ II, 36⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 165⁹³ II, 72-76 See also VI, 227, in which he terms clothes a deceptive substitute for real merit⁹⁴ II, 40-41⁹⁰ VI, 317-319⁹² IX, 294-295⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29-31

practical improvements⁹⁶ We have hurried to construct telegraphs with nothing important to say over them when they are completed⁹⁷ Meantime, Nature is oblivious to man's inventions⁹⁸ "Why so hot, little sir?"

Thoreau's whole conception of the business of living was, indeed, colored by his strong individualism, and his fear of coercion, either external or internal⁹⁹ He "never grasped the potentialities of cooperation in promoting efficient production,"¹⁰⁰ and would have died rather than become a mere cog in a machine For him, moreover, outward conformity to the conventional system was wholly incompatible with inward honesty¹⁰¹ Even the attempts with which his age was prolific, at cooperative community enterprises, left him cold When, in November, 1856, he paid a visit to the Spring estate at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, for the purpose of surveying the tract, mapping it, and laying it out in streets, he wrote to his sister Sophia in a vein of amused toleration¹⁰² His refusal to be inveigled by enthusiasts into either the Fruitlands or the Brook Farm enterprises is an earlier case in point Indeed, until later national developments broke through his natural reserve, and drew him into the raging sea of controversy, he was cool toward all political movements and associations, even in the matter of slavery¹⁰³ On days of so-called patriotic celebrations, Thoreau stayed at home and hoed beans¹⁰⁴

Stated abstractly, life was for Thoreau a pursuit of perfection, a truth which he expressed by the beautiful allegory contained in one of the last pages of *Walden*¹⁰⁵ True son of New England, he found in right conduct and a courageous facing of difficulties the only way out Speaking, at the moment, of

⁹⁶ VIII, 170⁹⁷ II, 57-58⁹⁸ VII, 43⁹⁹ James Mackaye, *Thoreau Philosopher of Freedom*, New York, 1930, pp 1x-x¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p x¹⁰¹ VI, 188¹⁰² *Ibid*, 287 In this connection, see note 102, pp 363-364¹⁰³ II, 8-9 See also VI, 260, and note 47, pp 357-358¹⁰⁴ II, 176 Cf also VI, 250¹⁰⁵ II, 359-360

Etzler's schemes, he says, "There is a speedier way than the Mechanical System can show to fill up marshes, to drown the roar of the waves, to tame hyenas, secure agreeable environs, diversify the land, and refresh it with 'rivulets of sweet water,' and that is by the power of rectitude and true behavior" ¹⁰⁶ From the pages of *Walden* comes the dictum, "However mean your life is, meet it and live it, do not shun it and call it hard names" ¹⁰⁷

With such a program of applied good will, his own life must often have seemed at variance. He was neither a pacifist ¹⁰⁸ nor a vigorous friend of peace. He confides to Emerson, "I think that Nature meant kindly when she made our brothers few" ¹⁰⁹ He shunned the Saturday Club, ¹¹⁰ regarded social contacts as unimportant, ¹¹¹ boasted that he rarely wrote to his correspondents above once in six months ¹¹² His vigorous condemnation of Philanthropy as the one over-appreciated virtue is notorious ¹¹³ To a large extent this attitude may be summed up in the observation that for Thoreau, living one's own life to the full is the best means of helping one's fellow men. By so doing, if he does not deliberately teach men how to live a simpler life, he will at least have given evidence that it can be done, and have shown them the fruit of the process ¹¹⁴ If *Walden* is to be reckoned a book with a purpose, and Thoreau confesses that it is, ¹¹⁵ the aim is to demonstrate that he who undertakes to live his life as he has dreamed it will attain unexpected success ¹¹⁶

Living as he lived, he found an opportunity for the physical labor which has been so largely eliminated from the education of the young, ¹¹⁷ and the life of the mature. "Why should we

¹⁰⁶ IV, 303, Selections following, p. 55

¹⁰⁷ II, 361

¹⁰⁸ VI, 250

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 141

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 345

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 353

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 354

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 211-212 Cf. also VI, 118, the original of a famous passage in *Walden* (II, 86), Selections following, p. 119 Cf. also notes 46 and 103, pp. 357 and 364

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 259

¹¹⁵ II, 4-5

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 356

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 56-58, 228, VII, 250

live with such hurry and waste of life?" he asks "We are determined to be starved before we are hungry Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow" ¹¹⁸ Visionary and impractical in one light, this is in another precisely the medicine for our age "Psychiatrists are only trying to patch up," says Canby, "what Thoreau, almost alone, has shown us how to cure" ¹¹⁹

The attitude of Thoreau toward government was by no means exclusively the outgrowth of his feeling on the subject of slavery In part, it arose from what he likes to term the savage side of his nature, ¹²⁰ a nature which could sympathize with the shad in their puzzlement at the dams erected by modern civilization ¹²¹ In part, it was the outgrowth of the characteristic individualism to which so many references have been made This showed itself sometimes in religious nonconformity, and as such brought him into one of his early clashes with the law Still more generally it arose from his constitutional desire to be left alone Interviewing a day laborer, John Field, who found himself trapped in a treadmill routine necessitated by the maintenance of the American standard of living, Thoreau observes, "But the only true America is that country where you are at liberty to pursue such a mode of life as may enable you to do without these [tea, coffee, and meat] and where the state does not endeavor to compel you to sustain the slavery and war and other superfluous expenses which directly or indirectly result from the use of such things" ¹²² Superimpose upon this natural resentment of interference, and upon the lively conscience which Thoreau inherited and reinforced with every breath he drew, a series of experiences which outraged every conviction

¹¹⁸ II, 103

¹²⁰ II, 232, VI, 36

¹²² II, 228 Cf also Thoreau's letter to Emerson, dated Feb 23, 1848, in which he mentions having read a lecture to the Lyceum on "The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government" (VI, 154)

¹¹⁹ *Classic Americans*, p 206

¹²¹ I, 35-36

as to the sacredness of the human soul, and you have a formula which drove him from retirement to become for a time an agitator and reformer "I do not believe in lawyers," he says in his address in behalf of John Brown, "in that mode of attacking or defending a man, because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not" ¹²³ In those words spoke the true spiritual voice of New England In the presence of what seem the eternal verities of justice and right, man-made laws can claim neither respect nor support

VII LITERARY THEORY AND PRACTICE

Of the chief characteristics of his style, favorable and unfavorable, Thoreau was himself well aware Reference has been made to his passion for terse, compact statement, fostered by his study of the Greeks This he achieved by the most rigorous revision "Seldom have I known an author," says Sanborn, ¹²⁴ "who made more drafts of what he might sometime print, or more persistently revised what he had once composed" Even the *Journal* entries, as we have them, had been twice revised To a Western admirer he wrote, February 10, 1856, "You may rely on it that you have the best of me in my books" ¹²⁵ Early in his *Journal* we find him critical of certain stylistic faults Among these were a fondness for paradox and a devotion to puns and word play Both remained highly characteristic features of his prose, though conscious effort reduced their proportions in later years Certain kinds of humor found Thoreau unresponsive. Rabelais, he thought intolerable ¹²⁶ by reason of his coarseness Knowing the virginal purity of

¹²³ IV, 438

¹²⁴ *Thoreau* (1917), p 55

¹²⁵ Jones, *Pertaining to Thoreau*, Introduction.

¹²⁶ IV, 335

Thoreau's mind, we may feel sure that he would have been repelled also by the robust animality of Falstaff. To the stimulating humor of Carlyle he responded enthusiastically. In general, however, he took the position that humor had its limitations, and he qualifies his high praise of Chaucer's Prologue with the comment, "yet it is essentially humorous as the loftiest genius never is."

On the other hand, Lowell stands almost alone among critics in his assertion that Thoreau quite lacked a sense of humor. Burroughs, who has attacked Thoreau's addiction to paradox, here comes vigorously to his support. In his word play, Thoreau exhibits, it is true, wit rather than humor, but this wit often gives a high degree of pleasure. At one point in *Cape Cod*,¹²⁷ after reciting a statute of 1695 requiring every unmarried man to kill six blackbirds or three crows on penalty of being denied the right to marry until he did, Thoreau says he still saw many blackbirds. "From which I concluded that either many men were not married, or many blackbirds were." At the same time he has a truly delightful sense of humor. One cannot help smiling, as we know Mark Twain would have smiled, at the case of the apprentice, also mentioned in *Cape Cod*,¹²⁸ who asked permission to go fishing, went to the Grand Banks, and stayed away three months. In *A Yankee in Canada*, too,¹²⁹ in speaking of the shape of the roof of one of the forts, he says, "It may be well to remember this when I build my next house, and have the roof 'all correct' for bomb shells." Those who feel concerned over Thoreau's lack of a sense of humor either do not know their Thoreau, or interpret the term too narrowly.

Fairer, perhaps, is Lowell's charge that Thoreau lacked the capacity for organization, though *Walden* may fairly be termed the masterpiece of an artist in mosaic. Thoreau was thrifty, and used up the scattered and fragmentary observations of his *Journal* with amazing ingenuity. In the elaborate revisions to

¹²⁷ IV, 38

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 182

¹²⁹ V, 29

which reference has already been made, there are few examples of changes of phrase, compared with the instances of insertion or excision. Apparently Thoreau was more likely to be satisfied with the phraseology of individual sentences than with their arrangement in paragraphs or their final inclusion or exclusion. The original magazine versions of "Paradise (to be) Regained" and "Thomas Carlyle and his Works," reprinted in the present volume, underwent extensive revision. Both were much curtailed, the first-named by several pages. To a substantial extent this change took the form of the omission of illustrative quotations, but by no means always. Stated summarily, however, much is omitted, but little changed. Scarcely a phrase has undergone alteration.

To return to the matter of organization in its larger aspects, one may concede Thoreau's weakness, yet offer in extenuation the desultory and casual nature of the author's own plan. Thoreau was engaged in part in the writing of autobiographical narrative, but through many of its pages *Walden* is quite as clearly an extended familiar essay. As such it is to be measured by more elastic rules, and not by the rigid standards which Lowell, forgetful of his own loosely built and rambling essays, is too ready to apply.

Other characteristics of his prose deserve passing mention. He employed analogies in abundance and recommended their use to those commencing the study of the art of writing.¹³⁰ He was guilty of chronic exaggeration, knew it, and sometimes defended it, as where he maintained that poetry is only an exaggeration of history.¹³¹ Later in life, however, he determined to have done with it.¹³² Of the strong influence of Carlyle upon his style at a certain stage in his development, there can be no question for anyone who has read Thoreau's essay upon that author. Carlyle's vividly individual expression appealed to a youthful taste, conventionally trained, but by nature rebellious.

¹³⁰ VIII, 457¹³¹ VII, 412¹³² XII, 16

Indeed, there is reason to believe that Thoreau thought more of Carlyle as a stylist than as a thinker

In still other ways the prose of Thoreau is set apart from that of his fellows. Some of these comparisons will not redound to his credit, but there can be no question of the generally high level of his prose. Particularly is this true of his nature description which stands in the front rank of all such prose from American pens. At its best it is forceful yet delicate, simple¹³³ yet eloquent, colloquial yet austere. Like its author it is eminently American, in all that we like to think that term should mean.

The literary world has, however, been of one mind in relegating to an inferior position most of Thoreau's verse. "Smoke" finds its way into the usual collections of American lyric poetry, and particular poems have their enthusiastic admirers, but so far there seems no renaissance for Thoreau, the poet. The creative impulse, though fairly violent while it lasted, was short-lived. Looking back regretfully upon his youth, Thoreau once remarked that some of the verse Emerson so summarily condemned with its author's approval was perhaps better than they had thought it. Nothing that we have seen leads us to lament Emerson's decision.

Thoreau was, nevertheless, an omnivorous reader of verse, and profoundly reverent in his feeling toward creative genius. Says he,¹³⁴ "When the sunshine falls on the path of the poet, he

¹³³On simplicity as a characteristic of a worthy style, see VI, 312. Further discussion of the mastery of the art of composition occurs in the *Journal* (IX, 140 and 293), where he points out the importance of getting one's ideas down on paper without delay. Thoreau believed in consecutive thinking and voluminous writing, preferably under some powerful driving impulse (VII, 35). Then must follow the elimination of the unfit, the clarifying and defining of the idea, the rewriting for stark simplicity and force. The wise author does not attempt a theme beyond his depth, but instead tries "to harvest that crop which his life yields" (XVII, 304). In later years, many pages of his *Journal* were filled with detailed routine observations of natural facts, the use for which was obscure. Canby (*Classic Americans*, p. 193) suggests that this last change may be the result of his drifting away from contact with Emerson and his terse style.

¹³⁴IV, 302.

enjoys all those pure benefits and pleasures which the arts slowly and partially realize from age to age. The winds which fan his cheek waft him the sum of that profit and happiness which their lagging inventions supply." But such a comparison of creative art with the science and machinery of our own age does not present poetry as Thoreau liked chiefly to think of it. Poetry meant to Thoreau as diverse things as Homer, Ossian, and Chaucer. Homer he loved because he possessed those elements of undying charm which we associate with the classical age.¹³⁵ Thoreau's fondness for the classics, though developed at school and college, lingered all his life, and, unlike that of Emerson, was never content with mere translations. There was, however, in the gloomy grandeur of Macpherson's now forgotten periods something which possessed special appeal for the savage side of Thoreau.¹³⁶ Ossian retained what Thoreau saw disappearing in civilized verse, the high dignity of the old bards. At the same time, few men of our day have written with such affection and admiration of the poetry of Chaucer,¹³⁷ and none, perhaps, gives evidence of knowing so well the lesser writers of the seventeenth century. The list of authors quoted in *A Week* is indeed an impressive one.

For Thoreau, the poet was a person whose life was worth recording, and a poem, the record of that life.¹³⁸ Hence his interest in all the facts connected with a poet's career. Whether a given poet was to be reckoned a genius or merely a man of talent was a question which depended on the definition of terms, and Thoreau was not at the beginning precise in their use. On one page genius is contrasted with talent,¹³⁹ but only a little later,¹⁴⁰ the poet is completely identified with the genius.

¹³⁵ See first passages from *A Week* reprinted in these Selections following, also *Walden* (II, III, III, III, III, III).

¹³⁶ I, 366-371.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 391-400, VII, 303, 310, 323.

¹³⁸ I, 365, VI, 168, VII, 275, VIII, 403, XI, 210, XII, 188, XVI, 131.

¹³⁹ I, 350, Selections following, p. 22. See Emerson, *Complete Works*, Centenary Ed., II, 270, for a similar statement.

¹⁴⁰ I, 362-366.

In a longer passage, however,¹⁴¹ he attacks the problem more in detail, and it now appears that "There are two kinds of writing, both great and rare—one that of genius, or the inspired, the other of intellect and taste, in the intervals of inspiration" With such a lofty conception of the creative impulse and the genius who experiences it, Thoreau not surprisingly attaches to the works of the poet's pen something of transcendental significance. Often loosely applied in connection with members of the Concord circle, the word *transcendental* is here employed advisedly. Thoreau knew his Wordsworth and shared the latter's belief in ecstatic experience, even when "recollected in tranquillity."¹⁴² For the products of such experience, words may often prove inadequate, and readers few. "The poet will write for his peers alone."¹⁴³ For his inspiration he must seek fertilizing contact with Nature.¹⁴⁴ She is his raw material,¹⁴⁵ the symbol of his thought.¹⁴⁶ He can only serve as the mirror to reflect her charms.¹⁴⁷ "A writer, a man writing, is the scribe of all nature, he is the corn and the grass and the atmosphere writing."¹⁴⁸

As to whether the product of the poet's pen shall be purely metrical, Thoreau is not prepared to say. Perhaps under the influence of Wordsworth, he talks in 1841 of "the best poetry in prose and verse."¹⁴⁹ "True verses are not counted on the poet's fingers but on his heart strings."¹⁵⁰ The most important factor in a poem is often something less tangible than words. "A true poem is distinguished not so much by a felicitous expression, or any thought it suggests, as by the atmosphere which surrounds it."¹⁵¹

More and more as he grew older, Thoreau came to think of

¹⁴¹ I, 400-403, Selections following, pp. 23-24

¹⁴² VIII, 468-469

¹⁴³ I, 350-351, Selections following, p. 22, also I, 363-365

¹⁴⁴ VIII, 413-414

¹⁴⁵ XI, 135

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 359

¹⁴⁷ XI, 183-184

¹⁴⁸ VIII, 441

¹⁴⁹ VII, 283

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 275. For a more conservative view see I, 93-94

¹⁵¹ I, 400

the writing of verse as subordinate to living in some larger sense. Originally he had thought of the poet as exempted from the pedestrian restrictions of ordinary minds,¹⁵² and, at least until he becomes a famous man with a reputation, from the rules of conventional conduct as well,¹⁵³ but now, with the cooling of the blood into an ordered existence, he feels that the poet may well be content to see "with the side of the eye"¹⁵⁴

Lest it seem that this excursion into the views of our author in a field little associated with his name requires defense, let it be said that the faculties of Thoreau were not busied merely with the placid observation of natural phenomena, nor in comment on the life of men about him. The armfuls of books which he carried home from the Harvard library fed a mind busy with many things. The comments on the nature of the poetic impulse which have been suggested in the foregoing paragraphs issue chiefly from the early years when he was himself writing verse, but are sufficiently numerous in later pages to show a persisting interest. It is these less familiar portions of Thoreau, together with the brisk sentences of comment on books and their authors which accompany them, which give to Thoreau his steadily increasing prestige as a critic.

How much the weight of Lowell's judgment, unfortunately reenforced by that of Stevenson, has depressed the literary fortunes of Thoreau, and postponed the day of his rise to deserved recognition and reasonable popularity, one can only speculate. In extenuation of his earlier notice of the *Week* it may, of course, be pleaded that the *Week* was an immature and faulty work, and Lowell's criticism youthful and irresponsible, but such an excuse cannot be offered for the later and more deliberate essay, "Thoreau," written in 1865, three years after Thoreau's death, in the fresh recollection of his manly and stirring anti-slavery addresses, and subsequent to the publication of

¹⁵² VII, 147-148¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 324¹⁵⁴ XIV, 314

Walden, the essay on Carlyle, *Excursions*, *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, and *A Yankee in Canada*

There had, however, intervened between the earlier notice and the later essay the misunderstanding over Lowell's omission of the sentence, "It [the pine tree] is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still," from Thoreau's chapter, "Chesuncook," printed in the July number of the *Atlantic*.¹⁰⁵ Thoreau's anger, vigorously expressed, his resolution never to offer again anything to the *Atlantic*, had brought into the open the incompatibility of the two natures. The resentment of Lowell, perhaps stirred to life by the fact that essays by Thoreau began again appearing in the *Atlantic* now that James T. Fields had replaced Lowell as editor, speaks through the 1865 essay.

Once he has paid his respects, in paragraphs sparkling with humor, to the age when American Transcendentalism had its flowering, and, with proper deference, to Emerson, its leader, he turns, with an abrupt change of tone to one of "the pistillate plants kindled to fruitage by the Emersonian pollen." There follows what Burroughs has not unfairly characterized as a diatribe, with a series of charges, many of which have already been considered here, and to which Burroughs himself gallantly responds. Most unkind, perhaps, is the statement that Thoreau grew more cynical, less sweet, as he grew older. Disillusioned he may have been, as most men, with the passing years, and grieved at heart, as all testify, at the civil strife into which he saw his beloved country plunged, but he was not

¹⁰⁵ Ferris Greenslet (*James Russell Lowell*, Boston, 1905, p. 40 n.) says, "Lowell's action was doubtless influenced by his desire to anger no further the orthodox religionists who had already been much disturbed by some passages in the *Autocrat*." Austin Warren ("Lowell on Thoreau," p. 452) suggests other possible causes for Thoreau's irritation. He thinks (p. 461) the later essay was made the more vigorous by Lowell's disposition to classify Thoreau as a romanticist, "substituting egotism and individualism for the social sense, naturalism for the study of man, and eccentricity for centrality."

embittered. It is, instead, the testimony of those who knew him best that in his last years the rough edges were worn off and he grew increasingly gentle. Any man might well covet a tribute such as was penned by Storms Higginson, a young friend writing for the *Harvard Magazine* of May, 1862. Higginson, who first met Thoreau in 1857, and knew him intimately from then to the end, speaks of his unfailing sweetness and kindness, and the affection felt for him by all.

In his conclusion, however, Lowell's feeling for truth and fairness somewhat restores the balance, and it is a pleasure to read his tribute to "the natural sweetness, sincerity, and nobleness of his temper," and "the rare quality of his mind." "His aim was a noble and a useful one, in the direction of 'plain living and high thinking.' It was a practical sermon on Emerson's text, that 'Things are in the saddle and ride mankind,' an attempt to solve Carlyle's problem (condensed from Johnson) of 'lessening your denominator.'"

Thoreau's place in the literature of his country is frankly resultant from one book securely placed on the shelf of classics. As is often the case, this means general disregard of other works which round out the picture and give us the full palette of the author's colors. But *Cape Cod* and *The Maine Woods* and the other pieces of travel literature will never have wide reading. They have no great narrative appeal, and their subject matter is not timely. *A Week*, precious autobiographically, is youthful, slow-moving, overloaded with didacticism and what Thoreau happened to be reading or otherwise to be interested in at the moment. The interest of the reading public in anything "dating" so distinctly as the anti-slavery speeches and essays must of necessity be limited. In short, we will read these works, for what, after all, finds supreme expression in *Walden* also, their expression of a variety of facets of a most intriguing and original personality, one of the most individual and arresting this country has produced. No borrower, like some of his contempo-

raries, from foreign literatures, he wrote strictly his own kind of book, about the things nearest home. Sensitive in his youth to the ideas and personality of a great contemporary, he nevertheless, once he had reached intellectual maturity, cut himself loose, and thought vigorously along his own lines, and the frequent mention of him in Emerson's *Journals* is precisely because the sage of Concord found Thoreau the most stimulating and unexpected man he knew. In short, although no skulker and no hermit, Thoreau had enough confidence in the wisdom Nature gave him, in his own ideals, and in his own manner of life, to be simply and sufficiently himself.

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I TEXT

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Chief omissions among the works of Thoreau follow, in order of their publication.

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Sir Walter Raleigh Ed by Henry Aiken Metcalf Boston 1905 (With introduction by F. B. Sanborn. A portion of this essay is printed in *A Week*, and in Vol. I of the *Journal*.)

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Boston 1905 2 vols (Particularly valuable because of the detail with which it fills out the sad, lonesome, but characteristically resolute journey to Minnesota The volume contains also some "fragments from the Staten Island journal of 1843 and an essay on Conversation," together with some of Thoreau's verse, here printed for the first time)
- Fifth Year Book of the Bibliophile Society* Boston 1906 (Contains a letter, dated July 5, 1836, and addressed to Henry Vose, also some fragments of unpublished journals)
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Bazalgette, Léon *Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Nature* Tr by Van Wyck Brooks New York 1924 (Novelized biography in the Maurois manner, soundly based on fact, but lacking scholarly apparatus)

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Marble, Annie Russell *Thoreau His Home, Friends, and Books* New York 1902 (Of no great significance)

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It supersedes the earlier works by Samuel A Jones [Cleveland 1894], and J P Anderson in Henry S Salt's *Life of Henry David Thoreau* [London 1896])
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A THOREAU CHRONOLOGY

- 1817 Born at Concord, Mass
1818 Family home removed to Chelmsford, Mass
1821 Beginning of residence in Boston
1823 Reestablishment of home in Concord The elder Thoreau begins manufacture of pencils
1833 Henry enters Harvard after study at Concord Academy
1835 Meets Orestes Brownson, while teaching school at Canton, Mass
1837 Is graduated from Harvard Teaches for a few days in the Town School, Concord Begins *Journal*
1838 With his brother John opens private school, Concord Lectures for first time before Concord Lyceum Makes first visit to Maine
1839 Goes with his brother John on journey, preserved later in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, Aug 31 to Sept 13
1840 Begins attending Alcott's Conversations The *Dial* launched, Thoreau contributes "Aulus Persius Flaccus," his "first printed paper of consequence," to the opening (July) number Writes *The Service*, first printed complete in 1902
1841 Begins residence at Emerson home Writes "Friendship", printed in *Dial*, reprinted in *A Week* Plunges into study of Oriental literatures
1842 John Thoreau, beloved brother (b 1814 or 1815), dies Writes "Natural History of Massachusetts," printed in *Dial*
1843 Delivers lecture on Sir Walter Raleigh at Concord (Feb 8) "The Landlord" and "Paradise (to be) Regained" published in *Democratic Review* Leaves Emerson home to become tutor in the family of William Emerson, a brother, on Staten Island, near New York

- "Walk to Wachusett" printed in *Boston Miscellany*
Translations of *Prometheus Bound* and poems of Anacreon, selections from *Laws of Menu* and "Ethnical Scriptures," and "A Winter Walk" printed in *Dial*
- 1844 "The Preaching of Buddha" and continuation of "Ethnical Scriptures" in *Dial*
- 1845 Begins residence at Walden Pond (July 4) *Sir Walter Raleigh* finished, printed in 1905
- 1846 Visits Maine woods
- 1847 "Thomas Carlyle and his Works" printed in *Graham's Magazine* Leaves Walden Pond (Sept 6) Resumes residence at R W Emerson's home while Emerson is in Europe
- 1848 "Ktaadn and the Maine Woods" published in the *Union Magazine*
- 1849 Resumes residence at his father's house Sister Helen (b 1812) dies *A Week* published "Civil Disobedience" printed as "Resistance to Civil Government" in *Aesthetic Papers* Visits Cape Cod
- 1850 Again visits Cape Cod Spends week in Canada with William Ellery Channing Fugitive Slave Law passed
- 1853 *A Yankee in Canada* begins publication in *Putnam's Magazine* Makes second visit to Maine Woods
- 1854 "Slavery in Massachusetts" delivered at Anti-Slavery Convention, Framingham Printed July 21 in the *Liberator* *Walden* published Cholmondeley, English friend, visits him
- 1855 Cholmondeley's gift of Oriental books arrives Thoreau visits Cape Cod Four chapters of *Cape Cod* printed in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*
- 1856 Maps Marcus Spring's large estate at Eagleswood near Perth Amboy, and with Alcott as companion sees Greeley, Walt Whitman, Beecher (Oct. 24 to Nov 25)
- 1857 Visits Cape Cod Visits Maine woods with Edward Hoar Meets John Brown (March)
- 1858 Receives second visit from Cholmondeley Camps on Monadnock with Blake Visits White Mountains with

- Edward Hoar "Chesuncook," portion of *The Maine Woods*, is printed in *Atlantic Monthly*
- 1859 Thoreau's father dies Visits Monadnock with Channing "A Plea for John Brown" is read, Oct 30, at Concord meeting
- 1860 "A Plea for John Brown" printed in James Redpath's *Echoes of Harper's Ferry* Address, "The Last Days of John Brown," is printed in the *Liberator* Climbs Monadnock with Channing—last experience of camping out (Nov) Address, "The Succession of Forest Trees," is printed in *Transactions of the Middlesex Agricultural Society for the Year 1860*
- 1861 Makes trip to Minnesota At work on "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," "Wild Apples," "Life without Principle," "Night and Moonlight," posthumously published in *Atlantic Monthly*
- 1862 May 6, dies

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Selections from
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

*

*From A WEEK ON THE CONCORD
AND MERRIMACK RIVERS*

[HOMER]

It is enough if Homer but say the sun sets ¹ He is as serene as nature, and we can hardly detect the enthusiasm of the bard It is as if nature spoke He presents to us the simplest pictures of human life, so that childhood itself can understand them, and the man must not think twice to appreciate his naturalness Each reader discovers for himself, that, with respect to the simpler features of nature, succeeding poets have done little else than copy his similes His more memorable passages are as naturally bright, as gleams of sunshine in misty weather Nature furnishes him not only with words, but with stereotyped lines and sentences from her mint

“As from the clouds appears the full moon,
All shining, and then again it goes behind the shadowy clouds,
So Hector, at one time appeared among the foremost,
And at another in the rear, commanding, and all with brass
He shone, like to the lightning of ægis-bearing Zeus ”

He conveys the least information, even the hour of the day, with such magnificence and vast expense of natural imagery, as if it were a message from the gods

“While it was dawn, and sacred day was advancing,
For that space the weapons of both flew fast, and the people fell,
But when now the woodcutter was preparing his morning meal,

¹Superior figures throughout the text indicate that notes with corresponding numbers may be found in pp 351 ff

In the recesses of the mountain, and had wearied his hands
With cutting lofty trees, and satiety came to his mind,
And the desire of sweet food took possession of his thoughts,
Then the Danaans, by their valor, broke the phalanxes,
Shouting to their companions from rank to rank "

When the army of the Trojans passed the night under arms,
keeping watch lest the enemy should re-embark under cover
of the dark,

"They, thinking great things, upon the neutral ground of war
Sat all the night, and many fires burned for them
As when in the heavens the stars round the bright moon
Appear beautiful, and the air is without wind,
And all the heights, and the extreme summits,
And the wooded sides of the mountains appear, and from the
heavens an infinite ether is diffused,
And all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart,
So between the ships and the streams of Xanthus
Appeared the fires of the Trojans before Ilium
A thousand fires burned on the plain, and by each
Sat fifty, in the light of the blazing fire,
And horses eating white barley and corn,
Standing by the chariots, awaited fair-throned Aurora "

The "white-armed goddess Juno," sent by the Father of
gods and men for Iris and Apollo,

"Went down the Idaean mountains to far Olympus,
As when the mind of a man, who has come over much earth,
Sallies forth, and he reflects with rapid thoughts,
There was I, and there, and remembers many things,
So swiftly the august Juno hastening flew through the air,
And came to high Olympus "

His scenery is always true, and not invented He does not
leap in imagination from Asia to Greece, through mid air,

—ἐπειὴ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξὺ
 "Ουρεὰ τε σχιοέντα, θαλάσσα τε ἡχήμεσα

for there are very many
 Shady mountains and resounding seas between

If his messengers repair but to the tent of Achilles, we do not wonder how they got there, but accompany them step by step along the shore of the resounding sea Nestor's account of the march of the Pylans against the Epeians is extremely lifelike —

"Then rose up to them sweet-worded Nestor, the shrill orator of the Pylans,
 And words sweeter than honey flowed from his tongue"

This time, however, he addresses Patroclus alone — "A certain river, Minyas by name, leaps seaward near to Arene, where we Pylans wait the dawn, both horse and foot Thence with all haste we sped as on the morrow ere 't was noon-day, accoutred for the fight, even to Alpheus' sacred source, &c." We fancy that we hear the subdued murmuring of the Minyas discharging its waters into the main the live-long night, and the hollow sound of the waves breaking on the shore,—until at length we are cheered at the close of a toilsome march by the gurgling fountains of Alpheus

There are few books which are fit to be remembered in our wisest hours, but the *Iliad* is brightest in the serenest days, and embodies still all the sunlight that fell on Asia Minor. No modern joy or ecstasy of ours can lower its height, or dim its lustre, but there it lies in the east of literature, as it were the earliest and latest production of the mind The ruins of Egypt oppress and stifle us with their dust, foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen, the death of that which never lived But the rays of Greek poetry struggle down to us, and mingle with the sunbeams of the recent day The statue of Menanion is cast down, but the shaft of the *Iliad* still meets the sun in his rising —

"Homer is gone, and where is Jove³ and where
 The rival cities seven³ His song outlives
 Time, tower, and god,—all that then was save Heaven "

So too, no doubt, Homer had his Homer, and Orpheus his Orpheus, in the dim antiquity which preceded them. The mythological system of the ancients, and it is still the mythology of the moderns, the poem of mankind, interwoven so wonderfully with their astronomy, and matching in grandeur and harmony the architecture of the heavens themselves, seems to point to a time when a mightier genius inhabited the earth. But after all, man is the great poet, and not Homer nor Shakespeare, and our language itself, and the common arts of life are his work. Poetry is so universally true and independent of experience, that it does not need any particular biography to illustrate it, but we refer it sooner or later to some Orpheus or Linus, and after ages to the genius of humanity, and the gods themselves.² (Pp 94-98)

[LABOR AND AUTHORSHIP]

Men have a respect for scholarship and learning greatly out of proportion to the use they commonly serve.³ We are amused to read how Ben Jonson engaged, that the dull masks with which the royal family and nobility were to be entertained, should be "grounded upon antiquity and solid learning." Can there be any greater reproach than an idle learning? Learn to split wood at least. The necessity of labor and conversation with many men and things, to the scholar is rarely well remembered, steady labor with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is unquestionably the best method of removing palaver and sentimentality out of one's style, both of speaking and writing. If he has worked hard from morning till night, though he may have grieved that he could not be watching the train of his thoughts during that time, yet the few hasty lines which at evening record his day's experience will be more musical and

true than his freest but idle fancy could have furnished Surely the writer is to address a world of laborers, and such therefore must be his own discipline He will not idly dance at his work who has wood to cut and cord before night-fall in the short days of winter, but every stroke will be husbanded, and ring soberly through the wood, and so will the strokes of that scholar's pen, which at evening record the story of the day, ring soberly, yet cheerily, on the ear of the reader, long after the echoes of his axe have died away The scholar may be sure that he writes the tougher truth for the calluses on his palms They give firmness to the sentence Indeed, the mind never makes a great and successful effort without a corresponding energy of the body We are often struck by the force and precision of style to which hard-working men, unpractised in writing, easily attain, when required to make the effort. As if plainness, and vigor, and sincerity, the ornaments of style, were better learned on the farm and in the workshop than in the schools The sentences written by such rude hands are nervous and tough, like hardened thongs, the sinews of the deer, or the roots of the pine As for the graces of expression, a great thought is never found in a mean dress, but though it proceed from the lips of the Woloffs, the nine Muses and the three Graces will have conspired to clothe it in fit phrase Its education has always been liberal, and its implied wit can endow a college The scholar might frequently emulate the propriety and emphasis of the farmer's call to his team, and confess that if that were written it would surpass his labored sentences Whose are the truly *labored* sentences? From the weak and flimsy periods of the politician and literary man, we are glad to turn even to the description of work, the simple record of the month's labor in the farmer's almanac, to restore our tone and spirits A sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plow instead of a pen, could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end The scholar requires hard and serious labor to give an impetus to his thought. He will learn to grasp the pen firmly so, and wield it gracefully and effectively, as an axe or a sword When we consider the weak and nerveless periods of some

literary men, who perchance in feet and inches come up to the standard of their race, and are not deficient in girth also, we are amazed at the immense sacrifice of thews and sinews. What! these proportions,—these bones,—and thus their work! Hands which could have felled an ox have hewed this fragile matter which would not have tasked a lady's fingers! Can this be a stalwart man's work, who has a marrow in his back and a tendon Achilles in his heel? They who set up the blocks of Stonehenge did somewhat, if they only laid out their strength for once, and stretched themselves.

Yet, after all, the truly efficient laborer will not crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure, and then do but what he loves best. He is anxious only about the fruitful kernels of time. Though the hen should sit all day, she could lay only one egg, and, besides, would not have picked up materials for another. Let a man take time enough for the most trivial deed, though it be but the paring of his nails. The buds swell imperceptibly, without hurry or confusion, as if the short spring days were an eternity —

Then spend an age in whetting thy desire,
Thou need'st not *hasten* if thou dost *stand fast*

Some hours seem not to be occasion for any deed, but for resolves to draw breath in. We do not directly go about the execution of the purpose that thrills us, but shut our doors behind us, and ramble with prepared mind, as if the half were already done. Our resolution is taking root or hold on the earth then, as seeds first send a shoot downward which is fed by their own albumen, ere they send one upward to the light.

(Pp 108-111)

[A NOCTURNE]

The Scene-shifter saw fit here to close the drama of this day, without regard to any unities which we mortals prize.⁴ Whether

it might have proved tragedy, or comedy, or tragi-comedy, or pastoral, we cannot tell. This Sunday ended by the going down of the sun, leaving us still on the waves. But they who are on the water enjoy a longer and brighter twilight than they who are on the land, for here the water, as well as the atmosphere, absorbs and reflects the light, and some of the day seems to have sunk down into the waves. The light gradually forsook the deep water, as well as the deeper air, and the gloaming came to the fishes as well as to us, and more dim and gloomy to them, whose day is a perpetual twilight, though sufficiently bright for their weak and watery eyes. Vespers had already rung in many a dim and watery chapel down below, where the shadows of the weeds were extended in length over the sandy floor. The vespertine pout had already begun to flit on leathern fin, and the finny gossips withdrew from the fluvial street to creeks and coves, and other private haunts, excepting a few of stronger fin, which anchored in the stream, stemming the tide even in their dreams. Meanwhile, like a dark evening cloud, we were wafted over the cope of their sky, deepening the shadows on their deluged fields.

Having reached a retired part of the river where it spread out to sixty rods in width, we pitched our tent on the east side, in Tyngsboro', just above some patches of the beach plum, which was now nearly ripe, where the sloping bank was a sufficient pillow, and with the bustle of sailors making the land, we transferred such stores as were required from boat to tent, and hung a lantern to the tent-pole and so our house was ready. With a buffalo spread on the grass, and a blanket for our covering, our bed was soon made. A fire crackled merrily before the entrance, so near that we could tend it without stepping abroad, and when we had supped, we put out the blaze, and closed the door, and with the semblance of domestic comfort, sat up to read the gazetteer, to learn our latitude and longitude, and write the journal of the voyage, or listened to the wind and the rippling of the river till sleep overtook us. There we lay under an oak on the bank of the stream, near to some farmer's cornfield, getting sleep, and forgetting where we were, a great blessing,

that we are obliged to forget our enterprises every twelve hours. Minks, muskrats, meadow-mice, woodchucks, squirrels, skunks, rabbits, foxes and weasels, all inhabit near, but keep very close while you are there. The river sucking and eddying away all night down toward the marts and the sea-board, a great work and freshet, and no small enterprise to reflect on. Instead of the Scythian vastness of the Billerica night, and its wild musical sounds, we were kept awake by the boisterous sport of some Irish laborers on the railroad, wafted to us over the water, still unwearied and unresting on this seventh day, who would not have done with whirling up and down the track with ever increasing velocity and still reviving shouts, till late in the night.

One sailor was visited in his dreams this night by the Evil Destinies, and all those powers that are hostile to human life, which constrain and oppress the minds of men, and make their path seem difficult and narrow, and beset with dangers, so that the most innocent and worthy enterprises appear insolent and a tempting of fate, and the gods go not with us. But the other happily passed serene and even ambrosial or immortal night, and his sleep was dreamless, or only the atmosphere of pleasant dreams remained, a happy natural sleep until the morning, and his cheerful spirit soothed and reassured his brother, for whenever they meet, the Good Genius is sure to prevail.

(Pp 118-120)

[TYRANNY IN GOVERNMENT]

I have not so surely foreseen that any Cossack or Chippeway would come to disturb the honest and simple commonwealth, as that some monster institution would at length embrace and crush its free members in its scaly folds, for it is not to be forgotten, that while the law holds fast the thief and murderer, it lets itself go loose. When I have not paid the tax⁵ which the State demanded for that protection which I did not want, itself has robbed me, when I have asserted the liberty it presumed to declare, itself has imprisoned me. Poor creature! if it knows no

better I will not blame it. If it cannot live but by these means, I can I do not wish, it happens, to be associated with Massachusetts, either in holding slaves or in conquering Mexico I am a little better than herself in these respects —As for Massachusetts, that huge she Briareus, Argus and Colchian Dragon conjoined, set to watch the Heifer of the Constitution and the Golden Fleece, we would not warrant our respect for her, like some compositions, to preserve its qualities through all weathers —Thus it has happened, that not the Arch Fiend himself has been in my way, but these toils which tradition says were originally spun to obstruct him They are cobwebs and trifling obstacles in an earnest man's path, it is true, and at length one even becomes attached to his unswept and undusted garret I love man—kind, but I hate the institutions of the dead unkind Men execute nothing so faithfully as the wills of the dead, to the last codicil and letter They rule this world, and the living are but their executors Such foundation too have our lectures and our sermons commonly They are all *Dudleian*,⁶ and piety derives its origin still from that exploit of *pious Æneas*, who bore his father, Anchises, on his shoulders from the ruins of Troy Or rather, like some Indian tribes, we bear about with us the mouldering relics of our ancestors on our shoulders If, for instance, a man asserts the value of individual liberty over the merely political commonweal, his neighbor still tolerates him, that is he who is *living near* him, sometimes even sustains him, but never the State Its officer, as a living man, may have human virtues and a thought in his brain, but as the tool of an institution, a jailor or constable it may be, he is not a whit superior to his prison key or his staff Herein is the tragedy, that men doing outrage to their proper natures, even those called wise and good, lend themselves to perform the office of inferior and brutal ones Hence come war and slavery in, and what else may not come in by this opening? But certainly there are modes by which a man may put bread into his mouth which will not prejudice him as a companion and neighbor

(Pp 135-136)

[A RHAPSODY ON SOUND]

Far in the night, as we were falling asleep on the bank of the Merrimack, we heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly,⁷ in preparation for a country muster, as we learned, and we thought of the line,

“When the drum beat at dead of night”

We could have assured him that his beat would be answered, and the forces be mustered. Fear not, thou drummer of the night, we too will be there. And still he drummed on in the silence and the dark. This stray sound from a far-off sphere came to our ears from time to time, far, sweet, and significant, and we listened with such an unprejudiced sense as if for the first time we heard at all. No doubt he was an insignificant drummer enough, but his music afforded us a prime and leisure hour, and we felt that we were in season wholly. These simple sounds related us to the stars. Aye, there was a logic in them so convincing that the combined sense of mankind could never make me doubt their conclusions. I stop my habitual thinking, as if the plow had suddenly run deeper in its furrow through the crust of the world. How can I go on, who have just stepped over such a bottomless skylight in the bog of my life. Suddenly old Time winked at me,—Ah you know me, you rogue,—and news had come that IT was well. That ancient universe is in such capital health, I think undoubtedly it will never die. Heal yourselves, doctors, by God I live —

Then idle Time ran gadding by
And left me with Eternity alone,
I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the verge of sight,—

I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves, the one historic truth, the most remarkable fact

which can become the distinct and uninvited subject of our thought, the actual glory of the universe, the only fact which a human being cannot avoid recognizing, or in some way forget or dispense with —

It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd

I have seen how the foundations of the world are laid, and I have not the least doubt that it will stand a good while

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life
I will not doubt the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young and wooes me old,
And to this evening hath me brought ⁸

What are ears? what is Time? that this particular series of sounds called a strain of music, an invisible and fairy troop which never brushed the dew from any mead, can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and he have been conversant with that same aerial and mysterious charm which now so tingles my ears? What a fine communication from age to age, of the fairest and noblest thoughts, the aspirations of ancient men, even such as were never communicated by speech! It is the flower of language, thought colored and curved, fluent and flexible, its crystal fountain tinged with the sun's rays, and its purling ripples reflecting the grass and the clouds. A strain of music reminds me of a passage of the Vedas, and I associate with it the idea of infinite remoteness, as well as of beauty and serenity, for to the senses that is furthest from us which addresses the greatest depth within us. It teaches us again and again to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct, and makes a dream our only real experience. As polishing expresses the vein in marble and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks any where. The hero is

the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds life and drum for us, we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe, then there is true courage and invincible strength.

(Pp. 181-183.)

[CANAL BOATS]

The canal boat is of very simple construction,⁹ requiring but little ship timber, and, as we were told, costs about two hundred dollars. They are managed by two men. In ascending the stream they use poles fourteen or fifteen feet long, shod with iron, walking about one third the length of the boat from the forward end. Going down, they commonly keep in the middle of the stream, using an oar at each end, or if the wind is favorable they raise their broad sail, and have only to steer. They commonly carry down bricks or wood,—fifteen or sixteen thousand bricks, and as many cords of wood, at a time,—and bring back stores for the country, consuming two or three days each way between Concord and Charlestown. They sometimes pile the wood so as to leave a shelter in one part where they may retire from the rain. One can hardly imagine a more healthful employment, or one more favorable to contemplation and the observation of nature. Unlike the mariner, they have the constantly varying panorama of the shore to relieve the monotony of their labor, and it seemed to us that as they thus glided noiselessly from town to town, with all their furniture about them, for their very homestead is a moveable, they could comment on the character of the inhabitants with greater advantage and security to themselves than the traveller in a coach, who would be unable to indulge in such broadsides of wit and humor in so small a vessel, for fear of the recoil. They are not subject to great exposure, like the lumberers of Maine, in any weather,

but inhale the healthfullest breezes, being slightly encumbered with clothing, frequently with the head and feet bare. When we met them at noon as they were leisurely descending the stream, their busy commerce did not look like toil, but rather like some ancient oriental game still played on a large scale, as the game of chess, for instance, handed down to this generation. From morning till night, unless the wind is so fair that his single sail will suffice without other labor than steering, the boatman walks backwards and forwards on the side of his boat, now stooping with his shoulder to the pole, then drawing it back slowly to set it again, meanwhile moving steadily forward through an endless valley and an everchanging scenery, now distinguishing his course for a mile or two, and now shut in by a sudden turn of the river in a small woodland lake. All the phenomena which surround him are simple and grand, and there is something impressive, even majestic, in the very motion he causes, which will naturally be communicated to his own character, and he feels the slow irresistible movement under him with pride, as if it were his own energy.

The news spread like wild fire among us youths, when formerly, once in a year or two, one of these boats came up the Concord river, and was seen stealing mysteriously through the meadows and past the village. It came and departed as silently as a cloud, without noise or dust, and was witnessed by few. One summer day this huge traveller might be seen moored at some meadow's wharf, and another summer day it was not there. Where precisely it came from, or who these men were who knew the rocks and soundings better than we who bathed there, we could never tell. We knew some river's bay only, but they took rivers from end to end. They were a sort of fabulous river-men to us. It was inconceivable by what sort of mediation any mere landsman could hold communication with them. Would they heave to to gratify his wishes? No, it was favor enough to know faintly of their destination, or the time of their possible return. I have seen them in the summer, when the stream ran low, mowing the weeds in mid-channel, and with hayers' jests cutting broad swathes in three feet of water, that

they might make a passage for their scow, while the grass in long windrows was carried down the stream, undried by the rarest hay weather. We used to admire unweariedly how their vessel would float, like a huge chip, sustaining so many casks of lime, and thousands of bricks, and such heaps of iron ore, with wheel-barrows aboard,—and that when we stepped on it, it did not yield to the pressure of our feet. It gave us confidence in the prevalence of the law of buoyancy, and we imagined to what infinite uses it might be put. The men appeared to lead a kind of life on it, and it was whispered that they slept aboard. Some affirmed that it carried sail, and that such winds blew here as filled the sails of vessels on the ocean, which again others much doubted. They had been seen to sail across our Fair-Haven bay by lucky fishers who were out, but unfortunately others were not there to see. We might then say that our river was navigable,—why not? In after years I read in print, with no little satisfaction, that it was thought by some that with a little expense in removing rocks and deepening the channel, “there might be a profitable inland navigation.” I then lived somewhere to tell of (Pp 221–224)

[LOCK MEN’S HOUSES]

The small houses which were scattered along the river at intervals of a mile or more, were commonly out of sight to us, but sometimes when we rowed near the shore, we heard the peevish note of a hen, or some slight domestic sound, which betrayed them. The lock men’s houses were particularly well placed, retired, and high, always at falls or rapids, and commanding the pleasantest reaches of the river,—for it is generally wider and more lake-like just above a fall,—and there they wait for boats. These humble dwellings, homely and sincere, in which a hearth was still the essential part, were more pleasing to our eyes than palaces or castles would have been. In the noon of these days, as we have said, we occasionally climbed the banks and approached these houses, to get a glass of water and make acquaintance with their inhabitants. High in the leafy

bank, surrounded commonly by a small patch of corn and beans, squashes and melons, with sometimes a graceful hop-yard on one side, and some running vine over the windows, they appeared like bee-hives set to gather honey for a summer. I have not read of any Arcadian life which surpasses the actual luxury and serenity of these New England dwellings. For the outward gilding, at least, the age is golden enough. As you approach the sunny door-way, awakening the echoes by your steps, still no sound from these barracks of repose, and you fear that the gentlest knock may seem rude to the oriental dreamers. The door is opened, perchance, by some Yankee-Hindoo woman, whose small-voiced but sincere hospitality, out of the bottomless depths of a quiet nature, has travelled quite round to the opposite side, and fears only to obtrude its kindness. You step over the white-scoured floor to the bright "dresser," lightly, as if afraid to disturb the devotions of the household,—for oriental dynasties appear to have passed away since the dinner table was last spread here,—and thence to the frequented curb, where you see your long-forgotten, unshaven face at the bottom, in juxta position with new-made butter and the trout in the well. "Perhaps you would like some molasses and ginger," suggests the faint noon voice. Sometimes there sits the brother who follows the sea, their representative man, who knows only how far it is to the nearest port, no more distances, all the rest is sea and distant capes,—patting the dog, or dandling the kitten in arms that were stretched by the cable and the oar, pulling against Boreas or the trade-winds. He looks up at the stranger half pleased, half astonished, with a mariner's eye, as if he were a dolphin within cast. If men will believe it, *sua si bona nôrunt*, there are no more quiet Tempes, nor more poetic and Arcadian lives, than may be lived in these New England dwellings. We thought that the employment of their inhabitants by day would be to tend the flowers and herds, and at night, like the shepherds of old, to cluster and give names to the stars from the river banks

(Pp 256-257)

[ROME AND GLORY DEPARTED]

The fact that Romans once inhabited her reflects no little dignity on Nature herself, that from some particular hill the Roman once looked out on the sea. She need not be ashamed of the vestiges of her children. How gladly the antiquary informs us that their vessels penetrated into this frith, or up that river of some remote isle! Their military monuments still remain on the hills and under the sod of the valleys. The oft-repeated Roman story is written in still legible characters in every quarter of the old world, and but to-day, perchance, a new coin is dug up whose inscription repeats and confirms their fame. Some "*Judæa Capta*," with a woman mourning under a palm tree, with silent argument and demonstration confirms the pages of history.

"Rome living was the world's sole ornament,
And dead is now the world's sole monument" ¹⁰

* * * * *

"With her own weight down pressed now she lies,
And by her heaps her hugeness testifies" ¹¹

If one doubts whether Grecian valor and patriotism are not a fiction of the poets, he may go to Athens and see still upon the walls of the temple of Minerva the circular marks made by the shields taken from the enemy in the Persian war, which were suspended there. We have not far to seek for living and unquestionable evidence. The very dust takes shape and confirms some story which we had read. As Fuller¹² said, commenting on the zeal of Camden,¹³ "A broken urn is a whole evidence, or an old gate still surviving out of which the city is run out." When Solon endeavored to prove that Salamis had formerly belonged to the Athenians, and not to the Megareans, he caused the tombs to be opened, and showed that the inhabitants of Salamis turned the faces of their dead to the same side with the Athenians, but the Megareans to the opposite side. There they were to be interrogated.

Some minds are as little logical or argumentative as nature, they can offer no reason or "guess," but they exhibit the solemn and incontrovertible fact. If a historical question arises, they cause the tombs to be opened. Their silent and practical logic convinces the reason and the understanding at the same time. Of such sort is always the only pertinent question and the only unanswerable reply.

Our own country furnishes antiquities as ancient and durable, and as useful, as any, rocks at least as well covered with moss, and a soil which if it is virgin, is but virgin mould, the very dust of nature. What if we cannot read Rome, or Greece, Etruria, or Carthage, or Egypt, or Babylon, on these, are our cliffs bare? The lichen on the rocks is a rude and simple shield which beginning and imperfect Nature suspended there. Still hangs her wrinkled trophy. And here too the poet's eye may still detect the brazen nails which fastened Time's inscriptions, and if he has the gift, decipher them by this clue. The walls that fence our fields, as well as modern Rome, and not less the Parthenon itself, are all built of *ruins*. Here may be heard the din of rivers, and ancient winds which have long since lost their names sough through our woods,—the first faint sounds of spring, older than the summer of Athenian glory, the titmouse lisping in the wood, the jay's scream, and blue-bird's warble, and the hum of

"bees that fly

About the laughing blossoms of sallowy "

Here is the gray dawn for antiquity, and our to-morrow's future should be at least paulo-post to theirs which we have put behind us. There are the red-maple and birchen leaves, old runes which are not yet deciphered, catkins, pine-cones, vines, oak-leaves, and acorns, the very things themselves, and not their forms in stone,—so much the more ancient and venerable. And even to the current summer there has come down tradition of a hoary-headed master of all art, who once filled every field and grove with statues and god-like architecture, of every design which Greece has lately copied, whose ruins are now mingled with the

dust, and not one block remains upon another The century sun and unwearied rain have wasted them, till not one fragment from that quarry now exists, and poets perchance will feign that gods sent down the material from heaven (Pp 264-266.)

[FRIENDSHIP]

Friendship is evanescent in every man's experience,¹⁴ and remembered like heat lightning in past summers Fair and flitting like a summer cloud,—there is always some vapor in the air, no matter how long the drought, there are even April showers Surely from time to time, for its vestiges never depart, it floats through our atmosphere It takes place, like vegetation in so many materials, because there is such a law, but always without permanent form, though ancient and familiar as the sun and moon, and as sure to come again The heart is forever inexperienced They silently gather as by magic, these never failing, never quite deceiving visions, like the bright and fleecy clouds in the calmest and clearest days The Friend is some fair floating isle of palms eluding the mariner in Pacific seas Many are the dangers to be encountered, equinoctial gales and coral reefs, ere he may sail before the constant trades But who would not sail through mutiny and storm, even over Atlantic waves, to reach the fabulous retreating shores of some continent man² (Pp 277-278)

[WAYFARING]

We now no longer sailed or floated on the river, but trod the unyielding land like pilgrims Sadi tells who may travel, among others,—“A common mechanic, who can earn a subsistence by the industry of his hand, and shall not have to stake his reputation for every morsel of bread, as philosophers have said ”—He may travel who can subsist on the wild fruits and game of the most cultivated country A man may travel fast enough and earn his living on the road I have frequently been applied to to do work when on a journey, to do tinkering and repair clocks, when I had a knapsack on my back. A man once

applied to me to go into a factory, stating conditions and wages, observing that I succeeded in shutting the window of a railroad car in which we were travelling, when the other passengers had failed "Hast thou not heard of a Sufi, who was hammering some nails into the sole of his sandal, an officer of cavalry took him by the sleeve, saying, come along and shoe my horse" Farmers have asked me to assist them in haying, when I was passing their fields A man once applied to me to mend his umbrella, taking me for an umbrella mender, because, being on a journey, I carried an umbrella in my hand while the sun shone Another wished to buy a tin cup of me, observing that I had one strapped to my belt, and a sauce-pan on my back The cheapest way to travel, and the way to travel the furthest in the shortest distance, is to go afoot, carrying a dipper, a spoon, and a fish-line, some Indian meal, some salt, and some sugar When you come to a brook or pond, you can catch fish and cook them, or you can boil a hasty-pudding, or you can buy a loaf of bread at a farmer's house for fourpence, moisten it in the next brook that crosses the road, and dip into it your sugar,—this alone will last you a whole day,—or, if you are accustomed to heartier living, you can buy a quart of milk for two cents, crumb your bread or cold pudding into it, and eat it with your own spoon out of your own dish Any one of these things I mean, not altogether I have travelled thus some hundreds of miles without taking any meal in a house, sleeping on the ground when convenient, and found it cheaper, and in many respects more profitable, than staying at home So that some have inquired why it would not be best to travel always But I never thought of travelling simply as a means of getting a livelihood A simple woman down in Tyngsboro', at whose house I once stopped to get a draught of water, when I said, recognizing the bucket, that I had stopped there nine years before for the same purpose, asked if I was not a traveller, supposing that I had been travelling ever since, and had now come round again, that travelling was one of the professions, more or less productive, which her husband did not follow But continued travelling is far from productive It begins with wearing

away the soles of the shoes, and making the feet sore, and ere long it will wear a man clean up, after making his heart sore into the bargain. I have observed that the after-life of those who have travelled much is very pathetic. True and sincere travelling is no pastime, but it is as serious as the grave, or any other part of the human journey, and it requires a long probation to be broken into it. I do not speak of those that travel sitting, the sedentary travellers whose legs hang dangling the while, mere idle symbols of the fact, any more than when we speak of sitting hens we mean those that sit standing, but I mean those to whom travelling is life for the legs. The traveller must be born again on the road, and earn a passport from the elements, the principal powers that be for him. He shall experience at last that old threat of his mother fulfilled, that he shall be skinned alive. His sores shall gradually deepen themselves that they may heal inwardly, while he gives no rest to the sole of his foot, and at night weariness must be his pillow, that so he may acquire experience against his rainy days.—So was it with us
(Pp 324-326)

[THE ESSENCE OF POETRY]

Poetry is the mysticism of mankind

The expressions of the poet cannot be analyzed, his sentence is one word, whose syllables are words. There are indeed no *words* quite worthy to be set to his music. But what matter if we do not hear the words always, if we hear the music?

Much verse fails of being poetry because it was not written exactly at the right crisis, though it may have been inconceivably near to it. It is only by a miracle that poetry is written at all. It is not recoverable thought, but a hue caught from a vaster receding thought.

A poem is one undivided, unimpeded expression fallen ripe into literature, and it is undividedly and unimpededly received by those for whom it was matured.

If you can speak what you will never hear,—if you can write what you will never read, you have done rare things.

(Pp 350-351)

[GENIUS IN POETRY]

There are two classes of men called poets ¹⁵ The one cultivates life, the other art,—one seeks food for nutriment, the other for flavor, one satisfies hunger, the other gratifies the palate There are two kinds of writing, both great and rare, one that of genius, or the inspired, the other of intellect and taste, in the intervals of inspiration The former is above criticism, always correct, giving the law to criticism It vibrates and pulsates with life forever It is sacred, and to be read with reverence, as the works of nature are studied There are few instances of a sustained style of this kind, perhaps every man has spoken words, but the speaker is then careless of the record Such a style removes us out of personal relations with its author, we do not take his words on our lips, but his sense into our hearts It is the stream of inspiration, which bubbles out, now here, now there, now in this man, now in that It matters not through what ice-crystals it is seen, now a fountain, now the ocean stream running under ground It is in Shakspeare, Alpheus, in Burns, Arethuse, but ever the same —The other is self-possessed and wise It is reverent of genius, and greedy of inspiration It is conscious in the highest and the least degree It consists with the most perfect command of the faculties It dwells in a repose as of the desert, and objects are as distinct in it as oases or palms in the horizon of sand The train of thought moves with subdued and measured step, like a caravan But the pen is only an instrument in its hand, and not instinct with life, like a longer arm It leaves a thin varnish or glaze over all its work The works of Goethe furnish remarkable instances of the latter

There is no just and serene criticism as yet Nothing is considered simply as it lies in the lap of eternal beauty, but our thoughts, as well as our bodies, must be dressed after the latest fashions Our taste is too delicate and particular It says nay to the poet's work, but never yea to his hope It invites him to adorn his deformities, and not to cast them off by expansion, as the tree its bark We are a people who live in a bright light,

in houses of pearl and porcelain, and drink only light wines, whose teeth are easily set on edge by the least natural sour. If we had been consulted, the backbone of the earth would have been made, not of granite, but of Bristol spar. A modern author would have died in infancy in a ruder age. But the poet is something more than a scald, "a smother and polisher of language," he is a Cincinnatus in literature, and occupies no west end of the world. Like the sun, he will indifferently select his rhymes, and with a liberal taste weave into his verse the planet and the stubble.

In these old books the stucco has long since crumbled away, and we read what was sculptured in the granite. They are rude and massive in their proportions, rather than smooth and delicate in their finish. The workers in stone polish only their chimney ornaments, but their pyramids are roughly done. There is a soberness in a rough aspect, as of unhewn granite, which addresses a depth in us, but a polished surface hits only the ball of the eye. The true finish is the work of time and the use to which a thing is put. The elements are still polishing the pyramids. Art may varnish and gild, but it can do no more. A work of genius is rough-hewn from the first, because it anticipates the lapse of time, and has an ingrained polish, which still appears when fragments are broken off, an essential quality of its substance. Its beauty is at the same time its strength, and it breaks with a lustre. (Pp 400-403)

[HOMEWARD BOUND]

Thus thoughtfully we were rowing homeward to find some autumnal work to do, and help on the revolution of the seasons. Perhaps Nature would condescend to make use of us even without our knowledge, as when we help to scatter her seeds in our walks, and carry burrs and cockles on our clothes from field to field.

All things are current found
On earthly ground,

Spirits and elements
Have their descents

Night and day, year on year,
High and low, far and near,
These are our own aspects,
These are our own regrets

Ye gods of the shore,
Who abide evermore,
I see your far headland,
Stretching on either hand,

I hear the sweet evening sounds
From your undecaying grounds,
Cheat me no more with time,
Take me to your clime

As it grew later in the afternoon, and we rowed leisurely up the gentle stream, shut in between fragrant and blooming banks, where we had first pitched our tent, and drew nearer to the fields where our lives had passed, we seemed to detect the hues of our native sky in the southwest horizon. The sun was just setting behind the edge of a wooded hill, so rich a sunset as would never have ended but for some reason unknown to men, and to be marked with brighter colors than ordinary in the scroll of time. Though the shadows of the hills were beginning to steal over the stream, the whole river valley undulated with mild light, purer and more memorable than the noon. For so day bids farewell even to solitary vales uninhabited by man. Two blue-herons, *ardea herodias*, with their long and slender limbs relieved against the sky, were seen travelling high over our heads,—their lofty and silent flight, as they were wending their way at evening, surely not to alight in any marsh on the earth's surface, but, perchance, on the other side of our atmosphere, a symbol for the ages to study, whether impressed upon the sky, or sculptured amid the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Bound

to some northern meadow, they held on their stately, stationary flight, like the storks in the picture, and disappeared at length behind the clouds. Dense flocks of blackbirds were winging their way along the river's course, as if on a short evening pilgrimage to some shrine of theirs, or to celebrate so fair a sunset.

“Therefore, as doth the pilgrim, whom the night
Hastes darkly to imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright
Of what's yet left thee of life's wasting day
Thy sun posts westward, passed is thy morn,
And twice it is not given thee to be born.”

The sun-setting presumed all men at leisure, and in a contemplative mood, but the farmer's boy only whistled the more thoughtfully as he drove his cows home from pasture, and the teamster refrained from cracking his whip, and guided his team with a subdued voice. The last vestiges of daylight at length disappeared, and as we rowed silently along with our backs toward home through the darkness, only a few stars being visible, we had little to say, but sat absorbed in thought, or in silence listened to the monotonous sound of our oars, a sort of rudimental music, suitable for the ear of Night and the acoustics of her dimly lighted halls,

“*Pulsæ referunt ad sidera valles,*”

and the valleys echoed the sound to the stars.

As we looked up in silence to those distant lights, we were reminded that it was a rare imagination which first taught that the stars are worlds, and had conferred a great benefit on mankind. It is recorded in the Chronicle of Bernaldez, that in Columbus's first voyage the natives “pointed towards the heavens, making signs that they believed that there was all power and holiness.” We have reason to be grateful for celestial phenomena, for they chiefly answer to the ideal in man. The

stars are distant and unobtrusive, but bright and enduring as our fairest and most memorable experiences "Let the immortal depth of your soul lead you, but earnestly extend your eyes upwards"

(Pp 415-418)

We had made about fifty miles this day with sail and oar, and now, far in the evening, our boat was grating against the bulrushes of its native port, and its keel recognized the Concord mud, where some semblance of its outline was still preserved in the flattened flags which had scarce yet erected themselves since our departure, and we leaped gladly on shore, drawing it up, and fastening it to the wild apple-tree, whose stem still bore the mark which its chain had worn in the chafing of the spring freshets

(P 420)

From JOURNAL

(February, 1838—*circa* 1847)

[GREECE]

In imagination¹⁶ I hie me to Greece as to enchanted ground
No storms vex her coasts, no clouds encircle her Helicon or
Olympus, no tempests sweep the peaceful Tempe or ruffle the
bosom of the placid Ægean, but always the beams of the summer's sun gleam along the entablature of the Acropolis, or are reflected through the mellow atmosphere from a thousand consecrated groves and fountains, always her sea-girt isles are dallying with their zephyr guests, and the low of kine is heard along the meads, and the landscape sleeps—valley and hill and woodland—a dreamy sleep Each of her sons created a new heaven and a new earth for Greece¹⁷ (VII, 29, Feb 16, 1838)

[THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE]

The world is a fit theatre to-day in which any part may be acted There is this moment proposed to me every kind of life that men lead anywhere, or that imagination can paint By another spring I may be a mail-carrier in Peru, or a South African planter, or a Siberian exile, or a Greenland whaler, or a settler on the Columbia River, or a Canton merchant, or a soldier in Florida, or a mackerel-fisher off Cape Sable, or a Robinson Crusoe in the Pacific, or a silent navigator of any sea So wide is the choice of parts, what a pity if the part of Hamlet be left out!

I am freer than any planet, no complaint reaches round the world I can move away from public opinion, from government, from religion, from education, from society Shall I be reckoned a ratable poll in the county of Middlesex, or be rated at one spear under the palm trees of Guinea? Shall I raise corn and

potatoes in Massachusetts, or figs and olives in Asia Minor² sit out the day in my office in State Street, or ride it out on the steppes of Tartary³ For my Brobdingnag I may sail to Patagonia, for my Lilliput, to Lapland In Arabia and Persia, my day's adventures may surpass the Arabian Nights' Entertainments I may be a logger on the head waters of the Penobscot, to be recorded in fable hereafter as an amphibious river-god, by as sounding a name as Triton or Proteus, carry furs from Nootka¹⁸ to China, and so be more renowned than Jason and his golden fleece, or go on a South Sea exploring expedition, to be hereafter recounted along with the periplus of Hanno¹⁹ I may repeat the adventures of Marco Polo or Mandeville

These are but few of my chances, and how many more things may I do with which there are none to be compared!

Thank Fortune, we are not rooted to the soil, and here is not all the world The buckeye does not grow in New England, the mockingbird is rarely heard here Why not keep pace with the day, and not allow of a sunset nor fall behind the summer and the migration of birds? Shall we not compete with the buffalo, who keeps pace with the seasons, cropping the pastures of the Colorado till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone? The wild goose is more a cosmopolite than we, he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Susquehanna, and plumes himself for the night in a Louisiana bayou The pigeon carries an acorn in his crop from the King of Holland's to Mason and Dixon's line Yet we think if rail fences are pulled down and stone walls set up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided If you are chosen town clerk, forsooth, you can't go to Tierra del Fuego this summer²⁰

But what of all this? A man may gather his limbs snugly within the shell of a mammoth squash, with his back to the northeastern boundary, and not be unusually straitened after all Our limbs, indeed, have room enough, but it is our souls that rust in a corner Let us migrate interiorly without intermission, and pitch our tent each day nearer the western horizon

The really fertile soils and luxuriant prairies lie on this side the Alleghanies. There has been no Hanno of the affections. Their domain is untravelled ground, to the Mogul's dominions
(VII, 129-131, March 21, 1840)

[A DRUMBEAT AT MIDNIGHT]

I shall not soon forget the sounds²¹ which lulled me when falling asleep on the banks of the Merrimack. Far into night I hear some tyro beating a drum incessantly with a view to some country muster, and am thrilled by an infinite sweetness as of a music which the breeze drew from the sinews of war. I think of the line,—

“When the drum beat at dead of night ”

How I wish it would wake the whole world to march to its melody, but still it drums on alone in the silence and the dark. Cease not, thou drummer of the night, thou too shalt have thy reward. The stars and the firmament hear thee, and their aisles shall echo thy beat till its call is answered, and the forces are mustered. The universe is attentive as a little child to thy sound, and trembles as if each stroke bounded against an elastic vibrating firmament. I should be contented if the night never ended, for in the darkness heroism will not be deferred, and I see fields where no hero has couched his lance
(VII, 144-145, June 19, 1840)

[WILDNESS CONFESSED]

I seem to see somewhat more of my own kith and kin in the lichens on the rocks than in any books. It does seem as if mine were a peculiarly wild nature, which so yearns toward all wildness. I know of no redeeming qualities in me but a sincere love for some things, and when I am reproved I have to fall back on to this ground. This is my argument in reserve for all cases. My love is invulnerable. Meet me on that ground, and you will find

me strong When I am condemned, and condemn myself utterly, I think straightway, "But I rely on my love for some things " Therein I am whole and entire Therein I am God-propped
(VII, 296, Dec 15, 1841)

[THE MUSEUM A GRAVEYARD]

I hate museums,²² there is nothing so weighs upon my spirits They are the catacombs of nature One green bud of spring, one willow catkin, one faint trill from a migrating sparrow would set the world on its legs again The life that is in a single green weed is of more worth than all this death They are dead nature collected by dead men I know not whether I muse most at the bodies stuffed with cotton and sawdust or those stuffed with bowels and fleshy fibre outside the cases

Where is the proper herbarium, the true cabinet of shells, and museum of skeletons, but in the meadow where the flower bloomed, by the seaside where the tide cast up the fish, and on the hills and in the valleys where the beast laid down its life and the skeleton of the traveller reposes on the grass² What right have mortals to parade these things on their legs again, with their wires, and, when heaven has decreed that they shall return to dust again, to return them to sawdust² Would you have a dried specimen of a world, or a pickled one²

Embalming is a sin against heaven and earth,—against heaven, who has recalled the soul and set free the servile elements, and against the earth, which is thus robbed of her dust. I have had my right-perceiving senses so disturbed in these haunts as to mistake a veritable living man for a stuffed specimen, and surveyed him with dumb wonder as the strangest of the whole collection For the strangest is that which, being in many particulars most like, is in some essential particular most unlike.
(VII, 464, [1837-47])

PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED²³

The Paradise within the Reach of all Men, without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery An Address to all intelligent Men In two parts By J A Etzler Part First Second English Edition pp 55 London, 1842

We learn that Mr Etzler is a native of Germany, and originally published his book in Pennsylvania, ten or twelve years ago, and now a second English edition, from the original American one, is demanded by his readers across the water, owing, we suppose, to the recent spread of Fourier's doctrines²⁴ It is one of the signs of the times We confess that we have risen from reading this book with enlarged ideas, and grander conceptions of our duties in this world It did expand us a little It is worth attending to, if only that it entertains large questions Consider what Mr Etzler proposes

"Fellow Men! I promise to show the means of creating a paradise within ten years, where everything desirable for human life may be had by every man in superabundance, without labor, and without pay, where the whole face of nature shall be changed into the most beautiful forms, and man may live in the most magnificent palaces, in all imaginable refinements of luxury, and in the most delightful gardens, where he may accomplish, without labor, in one year, more than hitherto could be done in thousands of years, may level mountains, sink valleys, create lakes, drain lakes and swamps, and intersect the land everywhere with beautiful canals, and roads for transporting heavy loads of many thousand tons, and for travelling one thousand miles in twenty-four hours, may cover the ocean with floating islands movable in any desired direction with immense power and celerity, in perfect security, and with all comforts and luxuries, bearing gardens and palaces, with thousands of families, and provided with rivulets of sweet water, may explore the interior of the globe, and travel from pole to pole in a fortnight, provide himself with means, unheard of yet, for increasing his knowledge of the world, and so his intelligence, lead a life of

continual happiness, of enjoyments yet unknown, free himself from almost all the evils that afflict mankind, except death, and even put death far beyond the common period of human life, and finally render it less afflicting. Mankind may thus live in and enjoy a new world, far superior to the present, and raise themselves far higher in the scale of being."

It would seem from this and various indications beside, that there is a transcendentalism in mechanics as well as in ethics. While the whole field of the one reformer lies beyond the boundaries of space, the other is pushing his schemes for the elevation of the race to its utmost limits. While one scours the heavens, the other sweeps the earth. One says he will reform himself, and then nature and circumstances will be right. Let us not obstruct ourselves, for that is the greatest friction. It is of little importance though a cloud obstruct the view of the astronomer compared with his own blindness. The other will reform nature and circumstances and then man will be right. Talk no more vaguely, says he, of reforming the world—I will reform the globe itself. What matters it whether I remove this humor out of my flesh, or the pestilent humor from the fleshy part of the globe? Nay, is not the latter the more generous course? At present the globe goes with a shattered constitution in its orbit. Has it not asthma, ague, and fever, and dropsy, and flatulence, and pleurisy, and is it not afflicted with vermin? Has it not its healthful laws counteracted, and its vital energy which will yet redeem it? No doubt the simple powers of nature properly directed by man would make it healthy and paradise, as the laws of man's own constitution but wait to be obeyed, to restore him to health and happiness. Our panaceas cure but few ills, our general hospitals are private and exclusive. We must set up another Hygeian than is now worshipped. Do not the quacks even direct small doses for children, larger for adults, and larger still for oxen and horses? Let us remember that we are to prescribe for the globe itself.

This fair homestead has fallen to us, and how little have we done to improve it, how little have we cleared and hedged and ditched! We are too inclined to go hence to a "better land,"

without lifting a finger, as our farmers are moving to the Ohio soil, but would it not be more heroic and faithful to till and redeem this New-England soil of the world? The still youthful energies of the globe have only to be directed in their proper channel. Every gazette brings accounts of the untutored freaks of the wind—shipwrecks and hurricanes which the mariner and planter accept as special or general providences, but they touch our consciences, they remind us of our sins. Another deluge would disgrace mankind. We confess we never had much respect for that antediluvian race. A thorough-bred business man cannot enter heartily upon the business of life without first looking into his accounts. How many things are now at loose ends. Who knows which way the wind will blow to-morrow? Let us not succumb to nature. We will marshal the clouds and restrain the tempests, we will bottle up pestilent exhalations, we will probe for earthquakes, grub them up, and give vent to the dangerous gases, we will disembowel the volcano, and extract its poison, take its seed out. We will wash water, and warm fire, and cool ice, and underprop the earth. We will teach birds to fly, and fishes to swim, and ruminants to chew the cud. It is time we had looked into these things.

And it becomes the moralist, too, to inquire what man might do to improve and beautify the system, what to make the stars shine more brightly, the sun more cheery and joyous, the moon more placid and content. Could he not heighten the tints of flowers and the melody of birds? Does he perform his duty to the inferior races? Should he not be a god to them? What is the part of magnanimity to the whale and the beaver? Should we not fear to exchange places with them for a day, lest by their behavior they should shame us? Might we not treat with magnanimity the shark and the tiger, not descend to meet them on their own level, with spears of sharks' teeth and bucklers of tiger's skin? We slander the hyæna, man is the fiercest and cruelest animal. Ah! he is of little faith, even the erring comets and meteors would thank him, and return his kindness in their kind.

How meanly and grossly do we deal with nature! Could we

not have a less gross labor? What else do these fine inventions suggest,—magnetism, the daguerreotype, electricity? Can we not do more than cut and trim the forest,—can we not assist in its interior economy, in the circulation of the sap? Now we work superficially and violently. We do not suspect how much might be done to improve our relation with animated nature, what kindness and refined courtesy there might be.

There are certain pursuits which, if not wholly poetic and true, do at least suggest a nobler and finer relation to nature than we know. The keeping of bees, for instance, is a very slight interference. It is like directing the sunbeams. All nations, from the remotest antiquity, have thus fingered nature. There are Hymettus and Hybla, and how many bee-renowned spots beside? There is nothing gross in the idea of these little herds,—their hum like the faintest low of kine in the meads. A pleasant reviewer has lately reminded us that in some places they are led out to pasture where the flowers are most abundant. "Columella tells us," says he, "that the inhabitants of Arabia sent their hives into Attica to benefit by the later-blowing flowers." Annually are the hives, in immense pyramids, carried up the Nile in boats, and suffered to float slowly down the stream by night, resting by day, as the flowers put forth along the banks, and they determine the richness of any locality, and so the profitableness of delay, by the sinking of the boat in the water. We are told, by the same reviewer, of a man in Germany, whose bees yielded more honey than those of his neighbors, with no apparent advantage, but at length he informed them that he had turned his hives one degree more to the east, and so his bees, having two hours the start in the morning, got the first sip of honey. Here, there is treachery and selfishness behind all this, but these things suggest to the poetic mind what might be done.

Many examples there are of a grosser interference, yet not without their apology. We saw last summer, on the side of a mountain, a dog employed to churn for a farmer's family, travelling upon a horizontal wheel, and though he had sore eyes, an alarming cough, and withal a demure aspect, yet their

bread did get buttered for all that Undoubtedly, in the most brilliant successes, the first rank is always sacrificed Much useless travelling of horses, *in extenso*, has of late years been improved for man's behoof, only two forces being taken advantage of,—the gravity of the horse, which is the centripetal, and his centrifugal inclination to go ahead Only these two elements in the calculation And is not the creature's whole economy better economized thus? Are not all finite beings better pleased with motions relative than absolute? And what is the great globe itself but such a wheel,—a larger tread-mill,—so that our horse's freest steps over prairies are oftentimes balked and rendered of no avail by the earth's motion on its axis? But here he is the central agent and motive power, and, for variety of scenery, being provided with a window in front, do not the ever-varying activity and fluctuating energy of the creature himself work the effect of the most varied scenery on a country road? It must be confessed that horses at present work too exclusively for men, rarely men for horses, and the brute degenerates in man's society

It will be seen that we contemplate a time when man's will shall be law to the physical world, and he shall no longer be deterred by such abstractions as time and space, height and depth, weight and hardness, but shall indeed be the lord of creation "Well," says the faithless reader, "'life is short, but art is long,' where is the power that will effect all these changes?" This it is the very object of Mr Etzler's volume to show At present, he would merely remind us that there are innumerable and immeasurable powers already existing in nature, unimproved on a large scale, or for generous and universal ends, amply sufficient for these purposes He would only indicate their existence, as a surveyor makes known the existence of a water-power on any stream, but for their application he refers us to a sequel to this book, called the "Mechanical System" A few of the most obvious and familiar of these powers are, the Wind, the Tide, the Waves, the Sunshine Let us consider their value

First, there is the power of the Wind, constantly exerted over the globe. It appears from observation of a sailing vessel, and from scientific tables, that the average power of the wind is equal to that of one horse for every one hundred square feet. "We know,"²⁵ says our author—

"that ships of the first class carry sails two hundred feet high, we may, therefore, equally, on land, oppose to the wind surfaces of the same height. Imagine a line of such surfaces one mile, or about 5,000 feet, long, they would then contain 1,000,000 square feet. Let these surfaces intersect the direction of the wind at right angles, by some contrivance, and receive, consequently, its full power at all times. Its average power being equal to one horse for every 100 square feet, the total power would be equal to 1,000,000 divided by 100, or 10,000 horses' power. Allowing the power of one horse to equal that of ten men, the power of 10,000 horses is equal to 100,000 men. But as men cannot work uninterruptedly, but want about half the time for sleep and repose, the same power would be equal to 200,000 men. We are not limited to the height of 200 feet, we might extend, if required, the application of this power to the height of the clouds, by means of kites."

But we will have one such fence for every square mile of the globe's surface, for, as the wind usually strikes the earth at an angle of more than two degrees, which is evident from observing its effect on the high sea, it admits of even a closer approach. As the surface of the globe contains about 200,000,000 square miles, the whole power of the wind on these surfaces would equal 40,000,000,000 men's power, and "would perform 80,000 times as much work as all the men on earth could effect with their nerves."

If it should be objected that this computation includes the surface of the ocean and uninhabitable regions of the earth, where this power could not be applied for our purposes, Mr Etzler is quick with his reply—"But, you will recollect," says he, "that I have promised to show the means for rendering the ocean as inhabitable as the most fruitful dry land, and I do not exclude even the polar regions."

The reader will observe that our author uses the fence only as a convenient formula for expressing the power of the wind, and does not consider it a necessary method of its application. We do not attach much value to this statement of the comparative power of the wind and horse, for no common ground is mentioned on which they can be compared. Undoubtedly, each is incomparably excellent in its way, and every general comparison made for such practical purposes as are contemplated, which gives a preference to the one, must be made with so an unfairness to the other. The scientific tables are, for the most part, true only in a tabular sense. We suspect that a loaded wagon, with a light sail, ten feet square, would not have been blown so far by the end of the year, under equal circumstances, as a common racer or dray horse would have drawn it. And how many crazy structures on our globe's surface, of the same dimensions, would wait for dry-rot if the traces of one horse were hitched to them, even to their windward side? Plainly, this is not the principle of comparison. But even the steady and constant force of the horse may be rated as equal to his weight at least. Yet we should prefer to let the zephyrs and gales bear, with all their weight, upon our fences, than that Dobbin, with feet braced, should lean ominously against them for a season.

Nevertheless, here is an almost incalculable power at our disposal, yet how trifling the use we make of it. It only serves to turn a few mills, blow a few vessels across the ocean, and a few trivial ends besides. What a poor compliment do we pay to our indefatigable and energetic servant!

"If you ask, perhaps, why this power is not used, if the statement be true, I have to ask in return, why is the power of steam so lately come to application? so many millions of men boiled water every day for many thousand years, they must have frequently seen that boiling water, in tightly closed pots or kettles, would lift the cover or burst the vessel with great violence. The power of steam was, therefore, as commonly known down to the least kitchen or wash-woman, as the power of wind, but close observation and reflection were bestowed neither on the one nor the other." 26

Men having discovered the power of falling water, which after all is comparatively slight, how eagerly do they seek out and improve these *privileges*? Let a difference of but a few feet in level be discovered on some stream near a populous town, some slight occasion for gravity to act, and the whole economy of the neighborhood is changed at once. Men do indeed speculate about and with this power as if it were the only privilege. But meanwhile this aerial stream is falling from far greater heights with more constant flow, never shrunk by drought, offering mill-sites wherever the wind blows, a Niagara in the air, with no Canada side,—only the application is hard.

There are the powers too of the Tide and Waves, constantly ebbing and flowing, lapsing and relapsing, but they serve man in but few ways. They turn a few tide mills, and perform a few other insignificant and accidental services only. We all perceive the effect of the tide, how imperceptibly it creeps up into our harbors and rivers, and raises the heaviest navies as easily as the lightest ship. Everything that floats must yield to it. But man, slow to take nature's constant hint of assistance, makes slight and irregular use of this power, in careening ships and getting them afloat when aground.

The following is Mr. Etzler's calculation on this head. To form a conception of the power which the tide affords, let us imagine a surface of 100 miles square, or 10,000 square miles, where the tide rises and sinks, on an average, 10 feet, how many men would it require to empty a basin of 10,000 square miles area, and 10 feet deep, filled with sea-water, in $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours and fill it again in the same time? As one man can raise 8 cubic feet of sea-water per minute, and in $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours 3,000, it would take 1,200,000,000 men, or as they could work only half the time, 2,400,000,000, to raise 3,000,000,000,000 cubic feet, or the whole quantity required in the given time.²⁷

This power may be applied in various ways. A large body, of the heaviest materials that will float, may first be raised by it, and being attached to the end of a balance reaching from the land, or from a stationary support, fastened to the bottom, when the tide falls, the whole weight will be brought to bear upon the

end of the balance. Also when the tide rises it may be made to exert a nearly equal force in the opposite direction. It can be employed whenever a *point d'appui* can be obtained.

"However, the application of the tide being by establishments fixed on the ground, it is natural to begin with them near the shores in shallow water, and upon sands, which may be extended gradually further into the sea. The shores of the continent, islands, and sands, being generally surrounded by shallow water, not exceeding from 50 to 100 fathoms in depth, for 20, 50, or 100 miles and upward. The coasts of North America, with their extensive sand-banks, islands, and rocks, may easily afford, for this purpose, a ground about 3,000 miles long, and, on an average, 100 miles broad, or 300,000 square miles, which, with a power of 240,000 men per square mile, as stated, at 10 feet tide, will be equal to 72,000 millions of men, or for every mile of coast, a power of 24,000,000 men.

"Rafts, of any extent, fastened on the ground of the sea, along the shore, and stretching far into the sea, may be covered with fertile soil, bearing vegetables and trees, of every description, the finest gardens, equal to those the firm land may admit of, and buildings and machineries, which may operate, not only on the sea, where they are, but which also, by means of mechanical connections, may extend their operations for many miles into the continent (Etzler's Mechanical System, page 24.) Thus this power may cultivate the artificial soil for many miles upon the surface of the sea, near the shores, and, for several miles, the dry land, along the shore, in the most superior manner imaginable, it may build cities along the shore, consisting of the most magnificent palaces, every one surrounded by gardens and the most delightful sceneries, it may level the hills and unevennesses, or raise eminences for enjoying open prospect into the country and upon the sea, it may cover the barren shore with fertile soil, and beautify the same in various ways, it may clear the sea of shallows, and make easy the approach to the land, not merely of vessels, but of large floating islands, which may come from, and go to distant parts of the world, islands that have every commodity and security for their inhabitants which the firm land affords."

"Thus may a power, derived from the gravity of the moon and the ocean, hitherto but the objects of idle curiosity to the

studious man, be made eminently subservient for creating the most delightful abodes along the coasts, where men may enjoy at the same time all the advantages of sea and dry land, the coasts may hereafter be continuous paradisiacal skirts between land and sea, everywhere crowded with the densest population. The shores and the sea along them will be no more as raw nature presents them now, but everywhere of easy and charming access, not even molested by the roar of waves, shaped as it may suit the purposes of their inhabitants, the sea will be cleared of every obstruction to free passage everywhere, and its productions in fishes, etc., will be gathered in large, appropriate receptacles, to present them to the inhabitants of the shores and of the sea "28

Verily, the land would wear a busy aspect at the spring and neap tide, and these island ships—these *terra infirmæ*—which realize the fables of antiquity, affect our imagination. We have often thought that the fittest locality for a human dwelling was on the edge of the land, that there the constant lesson and impression of the sea might sink deep into the life and character of the landsman, and perhaps impart a marine tint to his imagination. It is a noble word, that *mariner*—one who is conversant with the sea. There should be more of what it signifies in each of us. It is a worthy country to belong to—we look to see him not disgrace it. Perhaps we should be equally mariners and terreneers, and even our Green Mountains need some of that sea-green to be mixed with them.

The computation of the power of the waves is less satisfactory. While only the average power of the wind, and the average height of the tide, were taken before now, the extreme height of the waves is used, for they are made to rise ten feet above the level of the sea, to which, adding ten more for depression, we have twenty feet, or the extreme height of a wave. Indeed, the power of the waves, which is produced by the wind blowing obliquely and at disadvantage upon the water, is made to be, not only three thousand times greater than that of the tide, but one hundred times greater than that of the wind itself, meeting its object at right angles. Moreover, this power is

measured by the area of the vessel, and not by its length mainly, and it seems to be forgotten that the motion of the waves is chiefly undulatory, and exerts a power only within the limits of a vibration, else the very continents, with their extensive coasts, would soon be set adrift

Finally, there is the power to be derived from Sunshine, by the principle on which Archimedes contrived his burning mirrors, a multiplication of mirrors reflecting the rays of the sun upon the same spot, till the requisite degree of heat is obtained. The principal application of this power will be to the boiling of water and production of steam

“How to create rivulets of sweet and wholesome water, on floating islands, in the midst of the ocean, will be no riddle now. Sea-water changed into steam, will distil into sweet water, leaving the salt on the bottom. Thus the steam engines on floating islands, for their propulsion and other mechanical purposes, will serve, at the same time, for the distillery of sweet water, which, collected in basins, may be led through channels over the island, while, where required, it may be refrigerated by artificial means, and changed into cool water, surpassing, in salubrity, the best spring water, because nature hardly ever distils water so purely, and without admixture of less wholesome matter.”²⁹

So much for these few and more obvious powers, already used to a trifling extent. But there are innumerable others in nature, not described nor discovered. These, however, will do for the present. This would be to make the sun and the moon equally our satellites. For, as the moon is the cause of the tides, and the sun the cause of the wind, which, in turn, is the cause of the waves, all the work of this planet would be performed by these far influences.

“But as these powers are very irregular and subject to interruptions, the next object is to show how they may be converted into powers that operate continually and uniformly for ever, until the machinery be worn out, or, in other words, into

perpetual motions ” “Hitherto the power of the wind has been applied immediately upon the machinery for use, and we have had to wait the chances of the wind’s blowing, while the operation was stopped as soon as the wind ceased to blow But the manner, which I shall state hereafter, of applying this power, is to make it operate only for collecting or storing up power, and then to take out of this store, at any time, as much as may be wanted for final operation upon the machines The power stored up is to react as required, and may do so long after the original power of the wind has ceased And though the wind should cease for intervals of many months, we may have by the same power a uniform perpetual motion in a very simple way ”

“The weight of a clock being wound up gives us an image of reaction The sinking of this weight is the reaction of winding it up It is not necessary to wait till it has run down before we wind up the weight, but it may be wound up at any time, partly or totally, and if done always before the weight reaches the bottom, the clock will be going perpetually In a similar, though not in the same way, we may cause a reaction on a larger scale We may raise, for instance, water by the immediate application of wind or steam to a pond upon some eminence, out of which, through an outlet, it may fall upon some wheel or other contrivance for setting machinery a going³⁰ Thus we may store up water in some eminent pond, and take out of this store, at any time, as much water through the outlet as we want to employ, by which means the original power may react for many days after it has ceased ” “Such reservoirs of moderate elevation or size need not be made artificially, but will be found made by nature very frequently, requiring but little aid for their completion They require no regularity of form Any valley with lower grounds in its vicinity, would answer the purpose Small crevices may be filled up Such places may be eligible for the beginning of enterprises of this kind ”

The greater the height, of course the less water required But suppose a level and dry country, then hill and valley, and “eminent pond,” are to be constructed by man force, or if the springs are unusually low, then dirt and stones may be used, and the disadvantage arising from friction will be counterbalanced by their greater gravity Nor shall a single rood of dry land be

sunk in such artificial ponds as may be wasted, but their surfaces "may be covered with rafts decked with fertile earth, and all kinds of vegetables which may grow there as well as anywhere else "

And finally, by the use of thick envelopes retaining the heat, and other contrivances, "the power of steam caused by sunshine may react at will, and thus be rendered perpetual, no matter how often or how long the sunshine may be interrupted (Etzler's Mechanical System)"

Here is power enough, one would think, to accomplish somewhat These are the powers below Oh ye millwrights, ye engineers, ye operatives and speculators of every class, never again complain of a want of power, it is the grossest form of infidelity The question is not how we shall execute, but what Let us not use in a niggardly manner what is thus generously offered

Consider what revolutions are to be effected in agriculture First, in the new country, a machine is to move along taking out trees and stones to any required depth, and piling them up in convenient heaps, then the same machine, "with a little alteration," is to plane the ground perfectly, till there shall be no hills nor valleys, making the requisite canals, ditches and roads, as it goes along The same machine, "with some other little alterations," is then to sift the ground thoroughly, supply fertile soil from other places if wanted, and plant it, and finally, the same machine "with a little addition," is to reap and gather in the crop, thresh and grind it, or press it to oil, or prepare it any way for final use For the description of these machines we are referred to "Etzler's Mechanical System, page 11 to 27 " We should be pleased to see that "Mechanical System," though we have not been able to ascertain whether it has been published, or only exists as yet in the design of the author We have great faith in it But we cannot stop for applications now

"Any wilderness, even the most hideous and sterile, may be converted into the most fertile and delightful gardens The most dismal swamps may be cleared of all their spontaneous growth, filled up and levelled, and intersected by canals, ditches

and aqueducts, for draining them entirely The soil, if required, may be meliorated, by covering or mixing it with rich soil taken from distant places, and the same be mouldered to fine dust, levelled, sifted from all roots, weeds and stones, and sowed and planted in the most beautiful order and symmetry, with fruit trees and vegetables of every kind that may stand the climate "

New facilities for transportation and locomotion are to be adopted

"Large and commodious vehicles, for carrying many thousand tons, running over peculiarly adapted level roads, at the rate of forty miles per hour, or one thousand miles per day, may transport men and things, small houses, and whatever may serve for comfort and ease, by land Floating islands, constructed of logs, or of wooden-stuff prepared in a similar manner, as is to be done with stone, and of live trees, which may be reared so as to interlace one another, and strengthen the whole, may be covered with gardens and palaces, and propelled by powerful engines, so as to run at an equal rate through seas and oceans Thus, man may move, with the celerity of a bird's flight, in terrestrial paradises, from one climate to another, and see the world in all its variety, exchanging, with distant nations, the surplus of productions The journey from one pole to another may be performed in a fortnight, the visit to a transmarine country in a week or two, or a journey round the world in one or two months by land and water And why pass a dreary winter every year while there is yet room enough on the globe where nature is blessed with a perpetual summer, and with a far greater variety and luxuriance of vegetation? More than one-half the surface of the globe has no winter Men will have it in their power to remove and prevent all bad influences of climate, and to enjoy, perpetually, only that temperature which suits their constitution and feeling best " ⁸¹

Who knows but by accumulating the power until the end of the present century, using meanwhile only the smallest allowance, reserving all that blows, all that shines, all that ebbs and flows, all that dashes, we may have got such a reserved accumulated power as to run the earth off its track into a new orbit,

some summer, and so change the tedious vicissitude of the seasons³ Or, perchance, coming generations will not abide the dissolution of the globe, but, availing themselves of future inventions in aerial locomotion, and the navigation of space, the entire race may migrate from the earth, to settle some vacant and more western planet, it may be still healthy, perchance unearthly, not composed of dirt and stones, whose primary strata only are strewn, and where no weeds are sown It took but little art, a simple application of natural laws, a canoe, a paddle, and a sail of matting, to people the isles of the Pacific, and a little more will people the shining isles of space Do we not see in the firmament the lights carried along the shore by night, as Columbus did³ Let us not despair nor mutiny

"The dwellings also ought to be very different from what is known, if the full benefit of our means is to [be] enjoyed They are to be of a structure for which we have no name yet They are to be neither palaces, nor temples, nor cities, but a combination of all, superior to whatever is known Earth may be baked into bricks, or even vitrified stone by heat,—we may bake large masses of any size and form into stone and vitrified substance of the greatest durability, lasting even thousands of years, out of clayey earth, or of stones ground to dust, by the application of burning mirrors This is to be done in the open air, without other preparation than gathering the substance, grinding and mixing it with water and cement, moulding or casting it, and bringing the focus of the burning mirrors of proper size upon the same The character of the architecture is to be quite different from what it ever has been hitherto, large solid masses are to be baked or cast in one piece, ready shaped in any form that may be desired The building may, therefore, consist of columns two hundred feet high and upwards, of proportionate thickness, and of one entire piece of vitrified substance, huge pieces are to be moulded so as to join and hook on to each other firmly, by proper joints and folds, and not to yield in any way without breaking

"Foundries, of any description, are to be heated by burning mirrors, and will require no labor, except the making of the first moulds and the superintendence for gathering the metal and taking the finished articles away"

Alas, in the present state of science, we must take the finished articles away, but think not that man will always be a victim of circumstances

The countryman who visited the city and found the streets cluttered with bricks and lumber, reported that it was not yet finished, and one who considers the endless repairs and reforming of our houses, might well wonder when they will be done. But why may not the dwellings of men on this earth be built once for all of some durable material, some Roman or Etruscan masonry which will stand, so that time shall only adorn and beautify them? Why may we not finish the outward world for posterity, and leave them leisure to attend to the inner? Surely, all the gross necessities and economies might be cared for in a few years. All might be built and baked and stored up, during this, the term-time of the world, against the vacant eternity, and the globe go provisioned and furnished like our public vessels, for its voyage through space, as through some Pacific ocean, while we would "tie up the rudder and sleep before the wind," as those who sail from Lima to Manilla.

But, to go back a few years in imagination, think not that life in these crystal palaces is to bear any analogy to life in our present humble cottages. Far from it. Clothed, once for all, in some "flexible stuff," more durable than George Fox's suit of leather, composed of "fibres of vegetables," "glutinated" together by some "cohesive substances," and made into sheets, like paper, of any size or form, man will put far from him corroding care and the whole host of ills.

"The twenty-five halls in the inside of the square are to be each two hundred feet square and high, the forty corridors, each one hundred feet long and twenty wide, the eighty galleries, each from 1,000 to 1,250 feet long, about 7,000 private rooms, the whole surrounded and intersected by the grandest and most splendid colonnades imaginable, floors, ceilings, columns with their various beautiful and fanciful intervals, all shining, and reflecting to infinity all objects and persons, with splendid lustre of all beautiful colors, and fanciful shapes and pictures. All galleries, outside and within the halls, are to be provided with

many thousand commodious and most elegant vehicles, in which persons may move up and down, like birds, in perfect security, and without exertion. Any member may procure himself all the common articles of his daily wants, by a short turn of some crank, without leaving his apartment, he may,³² at any time, bathe himself in cold or warm water, or in steam, or in some artificially prepared liquor for invigorating health. He may, at any time, give to the air in his apartment that temperature that suits his feeling best. He may cause, at any time, an agreeable scent of various kinds. He may, at any time, meliorate his breathing air,—that main vehicle of vital power. Thus, by a proper application of the physical knowledge of our days, man may be kept in a perpetual serenity of mind, and if there is no incurable disease or defect in his organism, in constant vigor of health, and his life be prolonged beyond any parallel which present times afford.

“One or two persons are sufficient to direct the kitchen business. They have nothing else to do but to superintend the cookery, and to watch the time of the victuals being done, and then to remove them, with the table and vessels, into the dining-hall, or to the respective private apartments by a slight motion of the hand at some crank. Any extraordinary desire of any person may be satisfied by going to the place where the thing is to be had, and anything that requires a particular preparation in cooking or baking, may be done by the person who desired it.”

This is one of those instances in which the individual genius is found to consent, as indeed it always does, at last, with the universal. These last sentences have a certain sad and sober truth, which reminds us of the scripture of all nations. All expression of truth does at length take the deep ethical form. Here is hint of a place the most eligible of any in space, and of a servitor, in comparison with whom, all other helps dwindle into insignificance. We hope to hear more of him anon, for even crystal palace would be deficient without his invaluable services.

And as for the environs of the establishment,

“There will be afforded the most enrapturing views to be fancied, out of the private apartments, from the galleries, from the roof, from its turrets and cupolas,—gardens as far as the

eye can see, full of fruits and flowers, arranged in the most beautiful order, with walks, colonnades, aqueducts, canals, ponds, plains, amphitheatres, terraces, fountains, sculptural works, pavilions, gondolas, places for public amusement, etc., to delight the eye and fancy, the taste and smell " "The walks and roads are to be paved with hard vitrified, large plates, so as to be always clean from all dirt in any weather or season

The channels being of vitrified substance, and the water perfectly clear, and filtrated or distilled if required, may afford the most beautiful scenes imaginable, while a variety of fishes is seen clear down to the bottom playing about, and the canals may afford at the same time, the means of gliding smoothly along between various sceneries of art and nature, in beautiful gondolas, while their surface and borders may be covered with fine land and aquatic birds ³³ The walks may be covered with porticos adorned with magnificent columns, statues and sculptural works, all of vitrified substance, and lasting for ever, while the beauties of nature around heighten the magnificence and deliciousness "

"The night affords no less delight to fancy and feelings An infinite variety of grand, beautiful and fanciful objects and sceneries, radiating with crystalline brilliancy, by the illumination of gas-light, the human figures themselves, arrayed in the most beautiful pomp fancy may suggest, or the eye desire, shining even with brilliancy of stuffs and diamonds, like stones of various colors, elegantly shaped and arranged around the body, all reflected a thousand-fold in huge mirrors and reflectors of various forms, theatrical scenes of a grandeur and magnificence, and enrapturing illusions, unknown yet, in which any person may be either a spectator or actor, the speech and the songs reverberating with increased sound, rendered more sonorous and harmonious than by nature, by vaultings that are moveable into any shape at any time, the sweetest and most impressive harmony of music, produced by song and instruments partly not known yet, may thrill through the nerves and vary with other amusements and delights ³⁴

"At night the roof, and the inside and outside of the whole square, are illuminated by gas-light, which in the mazes of many-colored crystal-like colonnades and vaultings, is reflected with a brilliancy that give to the whole a lustre of precious stones, as far as the eye can see,—such are the future

abodes of men " "Such is the life reserved to true intelligence, but withheld from ignorance, prejudice, and stupid adherence to custom " "Such³⁵ is the domestic life to be enjoyed by every human individual that will partake of it Love and affection may there be fostered and enjoyed without any of the obstructions that oppose, diminish, and destroy them in the present state of men " "It would be as ridiculous, then, to dispute and quarrel about the means of life, as it would be now about water to drink along mighty rivers, or about the permission to breathe air in the atmosphere, or about sticks in our extensive woods "

Thus is Paradise to be Regained, and that old and stern decree at length reversed Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow All labor shall be reduced to "a short turn of some crank," and "taking the finished article away " But there is a crank,—oh, how hard to be turned! Could there not be a crank upon a crank,—an infinitely small crank?—we would fain inquire No,—alas! not But there is a certain divine energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet, which may be called the crank within,—the crank after all,—the prime mover in all machinery,—quite indispensable to all work Would that we might get our hands on its handle! In fact no work can be shirked It may be postponed indefinitely, but not infinitely Nor can any really important work be made easier by co-operation or machinery Not one particle of labor now threatening any man can be routed without being performed It cannot be hunted out of the vicinity like jackals and hyenas It will not run You may begin by sawing the little sticks, or you may saw the great sticks first, but sooner or later you must saw them both

We will not be imposed upon by this vast application of forces We believe that most things will have to be accomplished still by the application called Industry We are rather pleased after all to consider the small private, but both constant and accumulated force, which stands behind every spade in the field This it is that makes the valleys shine, and the deserts really bloom Sometimes, we confess, we are so degenerate as

to reflect with pleasure on the days when men were yoked like cattle, and drew a crooked suck for a plough After all, the great interests and methods were the same

It is a rather serious objection to Mr Etzler's schemes, that they require time, men, and money, three very superfluous and inconvenient things for an honest and well-disposed man to deal with "The whole world," he tells us, "might therefore be really changed into a paradise, within less than ten years, commencing from the first year of an association for the purpose of constructing and applying the machinery " We are sensible of a startling incongruity when time and money are mentioned in this connection The ten years which are proposed would be a tedious while to wait, if every man were at his post and did his duty, but quite too short a period, if we are to take time for it But this fault is by no means peculiar to Mr Etzler's schemes There is far too much hurry and bustle, and too little patience and privacy, in all our methods, as if something were to be accomplished in centuries The true reformer does not want time, nor money, nor co-operation, nor advice What is time but the stuff delay is made of? And depend upon it, our virtue will not live on the interest of our money He expects no income but our outgoes, so soon as we begin to count the cost the cost begins And as for advice, the information floating in the atmosphere of society is as evanescent and unserviceable to him as gossamer for clubs of Hercules There is absolutely no common sense, it is common nonsense If we are to risk a cent or a drop of our blood, who then shall advise us? For ourselves, we are too young for experience Who is old enough? We are older by faith than by experience In the unbending of the arm to do the deed there is experience worth all the maxims in the world

"It will now be plainly seen that the execution of the proposals is not proper for individuals Whether it be proper for government at this time, before the subject has become popular, is a question to be decided, all that is to be done, is to step forth, after mature reflection, to confess loudly one's conviction, and to constitute societies. Man is powerful but in union

with many Nothing great, for the improvement of his own condition, or that of his fellow men, can ever be effected by individual enterprise "

Alas! this is the crying sin of the age, this want of faith in the prevalence of a man Nothing can be effected but by one man He who wants help wants everything True, this is the condition of our weakness, but it can never be the means of our recovery We must first succeed alone, that we may enjoy our success together We trust that the social movements which we witness indicate an aspiration not to be thus cheaply satisfied In this matter of reforming the world, we have little faith in corporations, not thus was it first formed ³⁶

But our author is wise enough to say, that the raw materials for the accomplishment of his purposes, are "iron, copper, wood, earth chiefly, and a union of men whose eyes and understanding are not shut up by preconceptions " Aye, this last may be what we want mainly,—a company of "odd fellows" indeed

"Small shares of twenty dollars will be sufficient,"—in all, from "200,000 to 300,000,"—"to create the first establishment for a whole community of from 3000 to 4000 individuals"—at the end of five years we shall have a principal of 200 millions of dollars, and so paradise will be wholly regained at the end of the tenth year But, alas, the ten years have already elapsed, and there are no signs of Eden yet, for want of the requisite funds to begin the enterprise in a hopeful manner Yet it seems a safe investment Perchance they could be hired at a low rate, the property being mortgaged for security, and, if necessary, it could be given up in any stage of the enterprise, without loss, with the fixtures

Mr Etzler considers this "Address as a touchstone, to try whether our nation is in any way accessible to these great truths, for raising the human creature to a superior state of existence, in accordance with the knowledge and the spirit of the most cultivated minds of the present time " He has prepared a constitution, short and concise, consisting of twenty-one articles, so that wherever an association may spring up, it may

go into operation without delay, and the editor informs us that "Communications on the subject of this book may be addressed to C F Stollmeyer, No 6, Upper Charles street, Northampton square, London " ³⁷

But we see two main difficulties in the way First, the successful application of the powers by machinery, (we have not yet seen the "Mechanical System,") and, secondly, which is infinitely harder, the application of man to the work by faith This it is, we fear, which will prolong the ten years to ten thousand at least It will take a power more than "80,000 times greater than all the men on earth could effect with their nerves," to persuade men to use that which is already offered them Even a greater than this physical power must be brought to bear upon that moral power Faith, indeed, is all the reform that is needed, it is itself a reform Doubtless, we are as slow to conceive of Paradise as of Heaven, of a perfect natural as of a perfect spiritual world We see how past ages have loitered and erred, "Is perhaps our generation free from irrationality and error? Have we perhaps reached now the summit of human wisdom, and need no more to look out for mental or physical improvement?" Undoubtedly, we are never so visionary as to be prepared for what the next hour may bring forth ³⁸

Μέλλει τὸ θεῖον δ' ἔστι τοιούτων φύσει

The Divine is about to be, and such is its nature. In our wisest moments we are secreting a matter, which, like the lime of the shell fish, incrusts us quite over, and well for us, if, like it, we cast our shells from time to time, though they be pearl and of fairest tint Let us consider under what disadvantages science has hitherto labored before we pronounce thus confidently on her progress

"There was never any system in the productions of human labor, but they came into existence and fashion as chance directed men" "Only a few professional men of learning occupy themselves with teaching natural philosophy, chemistry, and the other branches of the sciences of nature, to a very limited extent, for very limited purposes, with very limited

means " The science of mechanics is but in a state of infancy It is true, improvements are made upon improvements, instigated by patents of government, but they are made accidentally or at hap-hazard There is no general system of this science, mathematical as it is, which develops its principles in their full extent, and the outlines of the application to which they lead There is no idea of comparison between what is explored and what is yet to be explored in this science The ancient Greeks placed mathematics at the head of their education But we are glad to have filled our memory with notions, without troubling ourselves much with reasoning about them "

Mr Etzler is not one of the enlightened practical men, the pioneers of the actual, who move with the slow deliberate tread of science, conserving the world, who execute the dreams of the last century, though they have no dreams of their own, yet he deals in the very raw but still solid material of all inventions He has more of the practical than usually belongs to so bold a schemer, so resolute a dreamer Yet his success is in theory, and not in practice, and he feeds our faith rather than contents our understanding His book wants order, serenity, dignity, everything,—but it does not fail to impart what only man can impart to man of much importance, his own faith It is true his dreams are not thrilling nor bright enough, and he leaves off to dream where he who dreams just before the dawn begins His castles in the air fall to the ground, because they are not built lofty enough, they should be secured to heaven's roof After all, the theories and speculations of men concern us more than their puny execution It is with a certain coldness and languor that we loiter about the actual and so called practical How little do the most wonderful inventions of modern times detain us They insult nature Every machine, or particular application, seems a slight outrage against universal laws How many fine inventions are there which do not clutter the ground? We think that those only succeed which minister to our sensible and animal wants, which bake or brew, wash or warm, or the like But are those of no account which are patented by fancy and imagination, and succeed so admirably in

our dreams that they give the tone still to our waking thoughts? Already nature is serving all those uses which science slowly derives on a much higher and grander scale to him that will be served by her. When the sunshine falls on the path of the poet, he enjoys all those pure benefits and pleasures which the arts slowly and partially realize from age to age. The winds which fan his cheek waft him the sum of that profit and happiness which their lagging inventions supply.

The chief fault of this book is, that it aims to secure the greatest degree of gross comfort and pleasure merely. It paints a Mahometan's heaven, and stops short with singular abruptness when we think it is drawing near to the precincts of the Christian's,—and we trust we have not made here a distinction without a difference. Undoubtedly if we were to reform this outward life truly and thoroughly, we should find no duty of the inner omitted. It would be employment for our whole nature, and what we should do thereafter would be as vain a question as to ask the bird what it will do when its nest is built and its brood reared. But a moral reform must take place first, and then the necessity of the other will be superseded, and we shall sail and plough by its force alone. There is a speedier way than the Mechanical System can show to fill up marshes, to drown the roar of the waves, to tame hyænas, secure agreeable environs, diversify the land, and refresh it with "rivulets of sweet water," and that is by the power of rectitude and true behavior. It is only for a little while, only occasionally, methinks, that we want a garden. Surely a good man need not be at the labor to level a hill for the sake of a prospect, or raise fruits and flowers, and construct floating islands, for the sake of a paradise. He enjoys better prospects than lie behind any hill. Where an angel travels it will be paradise all the way, but where Satan travels it will be burning marl and cinders. What says Veeshnoo Sarma? "He whose mind is at ease is possessed of all riches. Is it not the same to one whose foot is enclosed in a shoe, as if the whole surface of the earth were covered with leather?"

He who is conversant with the supernal powers will not worship these inferior deities of the wind, the waves, tide, and

sunshine But we would not disparage the importance of such calculations as we have described They are truths in physics, because they are true in ethics The moral powers no one would presume to calculate Suppose we could compare the moral with the physical, and say how many horse-power the force of love, for instance, blowing on every square foot of a man's soul, would equal No doubt we are well aware of this force, figures would not increase our respect for it, the sunshine is equal to but one ray of its heat The light of the sun is but the shadow of love "The souls of men loving and fearing God," says Raleigh, "receive influence from that divine light itself, whereof the sun's clarity, and that of the stars, is by Plato called but a shadow *Lumen est umbra Dei, Deus est Lumen Luminis* Light is the shadow of God's brightness, who is the light of light," and, we may add, the heat of heat Love is the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine Its power is incalculable, it is many horse power It never ceases, it never slacks, it can move the globe without a resting-place, it can warm without fire, it can feed without meat, it can clothe without garments, it can shelter without roof, it can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without But though the wisest men in all ages have labored to publish this force, and every human heart is, sooner or later, more or less, made to feel it, yet how little is actually applied to social ends True, it is the motive power of all successful social machinery, but, as in physics, we have made the elements do only a little drudgery for us, steam to take the place of a few horses, wind of a few oars, water of a few cranks and hand-mills, as the mechanical forces have not yet been generously and largely applied to make the physical world answer to the ideal, so the power of love has been but meanly and sparingly applied, as yet It has patented only such machines as the almshouses, the hospital, and the Bible Society, while its infinite wind is still blowing, and blowing down these very structures, too, from time to time Still less are we accumulating its power, and preparing to act with greater energy at a future time Shall we not contribute our shares to this enterprise, then?

T

From WALDEN

ECONOMY³⁹

(CHAPTER I)

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months.⁴⁰ At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

I should not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent. Some have asked what I got to eat, if I did not feel lonesome, if I was not afraid, and the like. Others have been curious to learn what portion of my income I devoted to charitable purposes, and some, who have large families, how many poor children I maintained. I will therefore ask those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me to pardon me if I undertake to answer some of these questions in this book.⁴¹ In most books, the *I*, or first person, is omitted, in this it will be retained, that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were any body else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life,⁴² and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives, some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land, for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me.⁴³ Perhaps these pages

are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to live in New England, something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. I have travelled a good deal in Concord, and every where, in shops, and offices, and fields, the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. What I have heard of Bramins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun, or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames, or looking at the heavens over their shoulders "until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach," or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree, or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires, or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars,—even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness. The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken, for they were only twelve, and had an end, but I could never see that these men slew or captured any monster or finished any labor. They have no friend Iolas⁴⁴ to burn with a hot iron the root of the hydra's head, but as soon as one head is crushed, two spring up.

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools, for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, that they might have seen with clearer eyes what field they were called to labor in. Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres, when man is condemned to eat

only his peck of dirt? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? They have got to live a man's life, pushing all these things before them, and get on as well as they can. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and wood-lot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited encumbrances, find it labor enough to subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.

But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon ploughed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before. It is said that Deucalion and Pyrrha created men by throwing stones over their heads behind them —⁴⁵

Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum,
Et documenta damus quâ simus origine nati

Or, as Raleigh rhymes it in his sonorous way,—

“From thence our kind hard-hearted is, enduring pain and care,
Approving that our bodies of a stony nature are”

So much for a blind obedience to a blundering oracle, throwing the stones over their heads behind them, and not seeing where they fell.

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day, he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men, his labor

would be depreciated in the market. He has no time to be any thing but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance—which his growth requires—who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly.

Some of you, we all know, are poor,⁴⁶ find it hard to live, are sometimes, as it were, gasping for breath. I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour. It is very evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live, for my sight has been whetted by experience, always on the limits, trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough, called by the Latins *æs alienum*, another's brass, for some of their coins were made of brass, still living, and dying, and buried by this other's brass, always promising to pay, promising to pay, to-morrow, and dying to-day, insolvent, seeking to curry favor, to get custom, by how many modes, only not state-prison offences, lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility, or dilating into an atmosphere of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, or import his groceries for him, making yourselves sick, that you may lay up something against a sick day, something to be tucked away in an old chest, or in a stocking behind the plastering, or, more safely, in the brick bank, no matter where, no matter how much or how little.

I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters that enslave both north and south. It is hard to have a southern overseer, it is worse to have a northern one,⁴⁷

but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself Talk of a divinity in man! Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night, does any divinity stir within him?⁴⁸ His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests? Does not he drive for Squire Make-a-stir? How godlike, how immortal, is he? See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate Self-emancipation even in the West Indian provinces of the fancy and imagination,—what Wilberforce⁴⁹ is there to bring that about? Think, also, of the ladies of the land weaving toilet cushions against the last day, not to betray too green an interest in their fates! As if you could kill time without injuring eternity

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation What is called resignation is confirmed desperation From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind There is no play in them, for this comes after work But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things

When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism, is the chief end of man, and what are the true necessities and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other Yet they honestly think there is no choice left But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear It is never too late to give up our prejudices No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof What every body echoes or in silence passes by as true to-day may turn out to be falsehood to-morrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields What old people say you cannot do you

try and find that you can ⁵⁰ Old deeds for old people, and new deeds for new ⁵¹ Old people did not know enough once, perchance, to fetch fresh fuel to keep the fire a-going, new people put a little dry wood under a pot, and are whirled round the globe with the speed of birds, in a way to kill old people, as the phrase is Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost One may almost doubt if the wisest man has learned any thing of absolute value by living Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures, for private reasons, as they must believe, and it may be that they have some faith left which belies that experience, and they are only less young than they were I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors They have told me nothing, and probably cannot tell me any thing, to the purpose Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me, but it does not avail me that they have tried it If I have any experience which I think valuable, I am sure to reflect that this my Mentors said nothing about

One farmer says to me, "You cannot live on vegetable food solely, for it furnishes nothing to make bones with," and so he religiously devotes a part of his day to supplying his system with the raw material of bones, walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his lumbering plough along in spite of every obstacle Some things are really necessities of life in some circles, the most helpless and diseased, which in others are luxuries merely, and in others still are entirely unknown

The whole ground of human life seems to some to have been gone over by their predecessors, both the heights and the valleys, and all things to have been cared for According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees, and the Roman prætors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs

to that neighbor" Hippocrates has even left directions how we should cut our nails, that is, even with the ends of the fingers, neither shorter nor longer Undoubtedly the very tedium and ennui which presume to have exhausted the variety and the joys of life are as old as Adam But man's capacities have never been measured, nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, "be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?"

We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests, as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes This was not the light in which I hoed them The stars are the apexes of what wonderful triangles! What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same one at the same moment!⁵² Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant? We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour, ay, in all the worlds of the ages History, Poetry, Mythology!—I know of no reading of another's experience so startling and informing as this would be

The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of any thing, it is very likely to be my good behavior What demon possessed me that I behaved so well? You may say the wisest thing you can old man,—you who have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind,—I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels

I think that we may safely trust a good deal more than we do We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we honestly bestow elsewhere Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength The incessant anxiety and strain of some is a well nigh incurable form of disease We are made to

exaggerate the importance of what work we do, and yet how much is not done by us! or, what if we had been taken sick? How vigilant we are! determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it, all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say, but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate, but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius said, "To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge." When one man has reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men will at length establish their lives on that basis.

Let us consider for a moment what most of the trouble and anxiety which I have referred to is about, and how much it is necessary that we be troubled, or, at least, careful. It would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessities of life and what methods have been taken to obtain them, or even to look over the old day-books of the merchants, to see what it was that men most commonly bought at the stores, what they stored, that is, what are the grossest groceries. For the improvements of ages have had but little influence on the essential laws of man's existence, as our skeletons, probably, are not to be distinguished from those of our ancestors.⁵³

By the words, *necessary of life*, I mean whatever, of all that man obtains by his own exertions, has been from the first, or from long use has become, so important to human life that few, if any, whether from savageness, or poverty, or philosophy, ever attempt to do without it. To many creatures there is in this sense but one necessary of life, Food. To the bison of the prairie it is a few inches of palatable grass, with water to drink, unless he seeks the Shelter of the forest or the mountain's

shadow None of the brute creation requires more than Food and Shelter The necessities of life for man in this climate may, accurately enough, be distributed under the several heads of Food, Shelter, Clothing, and Fuel, for not till we have secured these are we prepared to entertain the true problems of life with freedom and a prospect of success Man has invented, not only houses, but clothes and cooked food, and possibly from the accidental discovery of the warmth of fire, and the consequent use of it, at first a luxury, arose the present necessity to sit by it We observe cats and dogs acquiring the same second nature By proper Shelter and Clothing we legitimately retain our own internal heat, but with an excess of these, or of Fuel, that is, with an external heat greater than our own internal, may not cookery properly be said to begin? Darwin, the naturalist, says of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego,⁵⁴ that while his own party, who were well clothed and sitting close to a fire, were far from too warm, these naked savages, who were farther off, were observed, to his great surprise, "to be streaming with perspiration at undergoing such a roasting" So, we are told, the New Hollander⁵⁵ goes naked with impunity, while the European shivers in his clothes Is it impossible to combine the hardness of these savages with the intellectualness of the civilized man? According to Liebig, man's body is a stove, and food the fuel which keeps up the internal combustion in the lungs In cold weather we eat more, in warm less The animal heat is the result of a slow combustion, and disease and death take place when this is too rapid, or for want of fuel, or from some defect in the draught, the fire goes out Of course the vital heat is not to be confounded with fire, but so much for analogy It appears, therefore, from the above list, that the expression, *animal life*, is nearly synonymous with the expression, *animal heat*, for while Food may be regarded as the Fuel which keeps up the fire within us,—and Fuel serves only to prepare that Food or to increase the warmth of our bodies by addition from without,—Shelter and Clothing also serve only to retain the heat thus generated and absorbed

The grand necessity, then, for our bodies, is to keep warm,

to keep the vital heat in us. What pains we accordingly take, not only with our Food, and Clothing, and Shelter, but with our beds, which are our night-clothes, robbing the nests and breasts of birds to prepare this shelter within a shelter, as the mole has its bed of grass and leaves at the end of its burrow! The poor man is wont to complain that this is a cold world, and to cold, no less physical than social, we refer directly a great part of our ills. The summer, in some climates, makes possible to man a sort of Elysian life. Fuel, except to cook his Food, is then unnecessary, the sun is his fire, and many of the fruits are sufficiently cooked by its rays, while Food generally is more various, and more easily obtained, and Clothing and Shelter are wholly or half unnecessary. At the present day, and in this country, as I find by my own experience, a few implements, a knife, an axe, a spade, a wheelbarrow, &c., and for the studious, lamplight, stationery, and access to a few books, rank next to necessities, and can all be obtained at a trifling cost. Yet some, not wise, go to the other side of the globe, to barbarous and unhealthy regions, and devote themselves to trade for ten or twenty years, in order that they may live,—that is, keep comfortably warm,—and die in New England at last. The luxuriously rich are not simply kept comfortably warm, but unnaturally hot, as I implied before, they are cooked, of course *à la mode*.

Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindoo, Persian, and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward. We know not much about them. It is remarkable that *we* know so much of them as we do. The same is true of the more modern reformers and benefactors of their race. None can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what *we* should call voluntary poverty. Of a life of luxury the fruit is luxury, whether in agriculture, or commerce, or litera-

ture, or art. There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. Yet it is admirable to profess because it was once admirable to live. To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically.⁵⁶ The success of great scholars and thinkers is commonly a courtier-like success, not kingly, not manly. They make shift to live merely by conformity, practically as their fathers did, and are in no sense the progenitors of a nobler race of men. But why do men degenerate ever? What makes families run out? What is the nature of the luxury which enervates and destroys nations? Are we sure that there is none of it in our own lives? The philosopher is in advance of his age even in the outward form of his life. He is not fed, sheltered, clothed, warmed, like his contemporaries. How can a man be a philosopher and not maintain his vital heat by better methods than other men?

When a man is warmed by the several modes which I have described, what does he want next? Surely not more warmth of the same kind, as more and richer food, larger and more splendid houses, finer and more abundant clothing, more numerous incessant and hotter fires, and the like. When he has obtained those things which are necessary to life, there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities, and that is, to adventure on life now, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced. The soil, it appears, is suited to the seed, for it has sent its radicle downward, and it may now send its shoot upward also with confidence. Why has man rooted himself thus firmly in the earth, but that he may rise in the same proportion into the heavens above?—for the nobler plants are valued for the fruit they bear at last in the air and light, far from the ground, and are not treated like the humbler esculents, which, though they may be biennials, are cultivated only till they have perfected their root, and often cut down at top for this purpose, so that most would not know them in their flowering season.

I do not mean to prescribe rules to strong and valiant natures,

who will mind their own affairs whether in heaven or hell, and perchance build more magnificently and spend more lavishly than the richest, without ever impoverishing themselves, not knowing how they live,—if, indeed, there are any such, as has been dreamed, nor to those who find their encouragement and inspiration in precisely the present condition of things, and cherish it with the fondness and enthusiasm of lovers,—and, to some extent, I reckon myself in this number, I do not speak to those who are well employed, in whatever circumstances, and they know whether they are well employed or not,—but mainly to the mass of men who are discontented, and idly complaining of the hardness of their lot or of the times, when they might improve them. There are some who complain most energetically and inconsolably of any, because they are, as they say, doing their duty. I also have in my mind that seemingly wealthy, but most terribly impoverished class of all, who have accumulated dross, but know not how to use it, or get rid of it, and thus have forged their own golden or silver fetters.

If I should attempt to tell how I have desired to spend my life in years past, it would probably surprise those of my readers who are somewhat acquainted with its actual history, it would certainly astonish those who know nothing about it. I will only hint at some of the enterprises which I have cherished.

In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too, to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment, to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove, and am still on their trail.⁵⁷ Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear

behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt, many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.⁵⁸

So many autumn, ay, and winter days, spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express! I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, running in the face of it. If it had concerned either of the political parties, depend upon it, it would have appeared in the Gazette with the earliest intelligence. At other times watching from the observatory of some cliff or tree, to telegraph any new arrival, or waiting at evening on the hill-tops for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, and that, manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun.

For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains.⁵⁹ However, in this case my pains were their own reward.

For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow storms and rain storms, and did my duty faithfully, surveyor, if not of highways, then of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility.

I have looked after the wild stock of the town, which give a faithful herdsman a good deal of trouble by leaping fences, and I have had an eye to the unfrequented nooks and corners of the farm, though I did not always know whether Jonas or Solomon worked in a particular field to-day, that was none of

my business I have watered the red huckleberry, the sand cherry and the nettle tree, the red pine and the black ash, the white grape and the yellow violet, which might have withered else in dry seasons

In short, I went on thus for a long time, I may say it without boasting, faithfully minding my business, till it became more and more evident that my townsmen would not after all admit me into the list of town officers, nor make my place a sinecure with a moderate allowance. My accounts, which I can swear to have kept faithfully, I have, indeed, never got audited, still less accepted, still less paid and settled. However, I have not set my heart on that.

Not long since, a strolling Indian went to sell baskets at the house of a well-known lawyer⁶⁰ in my neighborhood. "Do you wish to buy any baskets?" he asked. "No, we do not want any," was the reply. "What!" exclaimed the Indian as he went out the gate, "do you mean to starve us?" Having seen his industrious white neighbors so well off,—that the lawyer had only to weave arguments, and by some magic wealth and standing followed, he had said to himself, I will go into business, I will weave baskets, it is a thing which I can do. Thinking that when he had made the baskets he would have done his part, and then it would be the white man's to buy them. He had not discovered that it was necessary for him to make it worth the other's while to buy them, or at least make him think that it was so, or to make something else which it would be worth his while to buy. I too had woven a kind of basket of a delicate texture, but I had not made it worth any one's while to buy them. Yet not the less, in my case, did I think it worth my while to weave them, and instead of studying how to make it worth men's while to buy my baskets, I studied rather how to avoid the necessity of selling them. The life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind. Why should we exaggerate any one kind at the expense of the others?

Finding that my fellow-citizens were not likely to offer me any room in the court house, or any curacy or living any where else, but I must shift for myself, I turned my face more

exclusively than ever to the woods, where I was better known I determined to go into business at once, and not wait to acquire the usual capital, using such slender means as I had already got. My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business⁶¹ with the fewest obstacles, to be hindered from accomplishing which for want of a little common sense, a little enterprise and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish.

I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits, they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting house on the coast, in some Salem harbor, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person, to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter, to buy and sell and keep the accounts, to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent, to superintend the discharge of imports night and day, to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time,—often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore,—to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise, to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market, to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace every where, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization,—taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation,—charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier,—there is the untold fate of La Perouse,⁶²—universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phœnicians down to our day, in fine, account of stock to be

taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labor to task the faculties of a man,—such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.

I have thought that Walden Pond would be a good place for business, not solely on account of the railroad and the ice trade, it offers advantages which it may not be good policy to divulge, it is a good post and a good foundation. No Neva marshes to be filled, though you must every where build on piles of your own driving. It is said that a flood-tide, with a westerly wind, and ice in the Neva, would sweep St. Petersburg from the face of the earth.

As this business was to be entered into without the usual capital, it may not be easy to conjecture where those means, that will still be indispensable to every such undertaking, were to be obtained. As for Clothing, to come at once to the practical part of the question, perhaps we are led oftener by the love of novelty, and a regard for the opinions of men, in procuring it, than by a true utility. Let him who has work to do recollect that the object of clothing is, first, to retain the vital heat, and secondly, in this state of society, to cover nakedness, and he may judge how much of any necessary or important work may be accomplished without adding to his wardrobe. Kings and queens who wear a suit but once, though made by some tailor or dressmaker to their majesties, cannot know the comfort of wearing a suit that fits. They are no better than wooden horses to hang the clean clothes on. Every day our garments become more assimilated to ourselves, receiving the impress of the wearer's character, until we hesitate to lay them aside, without such delay and medical appliances and some such solemnity even as our bodies. No man ever stood the lower in my estimation for having a patch in his clothes, yet I am sure that there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least clean and unpatched clothes, than to have a sound conscience. But even if the rent is not mended, perhaps the worst vice betrayed is improvidence. I sometimes try my acquaintances by such

tests as this,—who could wear a patch, or two extra seams only, over the knee? Most behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should do it. It would be easier for them to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloons. Often if an accident happens to a gentleman's legs, they can be mended, but if a similar accident happens to the legs of his pantaloons, there is no help for it, for he considers, not what is truly respectable, but what is respected. We know but few men, a great many coats and breeches.⁶³ Dress a scarecrow in your last shift, you standing shiftless by, who would not soonest salute the scarecrow? Passing a cornfield the other day, close by a hat and coat on a stake, I recognized the owner of the farm. He was only a little more weather-beaten than when I saw him last. I have heard of a dog that barked at every stranger who approached his master's premises with clothes on, but was easily quieted by a naked thief. It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes. Could you, in such a case, tell surely of any company of civilized men, which belonged to the most respected class? When Madam Pfeiffer,⁶⁴ in her adventurous travels round the world, from east to west, had got so near home as Asiatic Russia, she says that she felt the necessity of wearing other than a travelling dress, when she went to meet the authorities, for she "was now in a civilized country, where — people are judged of by their clothes." Even in our democratic New England towns the accidental possession of wealth, and its manifestation in dress and equipage alone, obtain for the possessor almost universal respect. But they who yield such respect, numerous as they are, are so far heathen, and need to have a missionary sent to them. Beside, clothes introduced sewing, a kind of work which you may call endless, a woman's dress, at least, is never done.

A man who has at length found something to do will not need to get a new suit to do it in, for him the old will do, that has lain dusty in the garret for an indeterminate period. Old shoes will serve a hero longer than they have served his valet,—if a hero ever has a valet,—bare feet are older than shoes, and

he can make them do. Only they who go to soirees and legislative halls must have new coats, coats to change as often as the man changes in them. But if my jacket and trousers, my hat and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do, will they not? Who ever saw his old clothes,—his old coat, actually worn out, resolved into its primitive elements, so that it was not a deed of charity to bestow it on some poor boy, by him perchance to be bestowed on some poorer still, or shall we say richer, who could do with less? I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. If there is not a new man, how can the new clothes be made to fit? If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes. All men want, not something to *do with*, but something to *do*, or rather something to *be*. Perhaps we should never procure a new suit, however ragged or dirty the old, until we have so conducted, so enterprised or sailed in some way, that we feel like new men in the old, and that to retain it would be like keeping new wine in old bottles. Our moulting season, like that of the fowls, must be a crisis in our lives. The loon retires to solitary ponds to spend it. Thus also the snake casts its slough, and the caterpillar its wormy coat, by an internal industry and expansion, for clothes are but our outmost cuticle and mortal coil. Otherwise we shall be found sailing under false colors, and be inevitably cashiered at last by our own opinion, as well as that of mankind.

We don garment after garment, as if we grew like exogenous plants by addition without. Our outside and often thin and fanciful clothes are our epidermis or false skin, which partakes not of our life, and may be stripped off here and there without fatal injury, our thicker garments, constantly worn, are our cellular integument, or cortex, but our shirts are our liber or true bark, which cannot be removed without girdling and so destroying the man. I believe that all races at some seasons wear something equivalent to the shirt. It is desirable that a man be clad so simply that he can lay his hands on himself in the dark, and that he live in all respects so compactly and preparedly, that, if an enemy take the town, he can, like the old philoso-

pher,⁶⁵ walk out the gate empty-handed without anxiety. While one thick garment is, for most purposes, as good as three thin ones, and cheap clothing can be obtained at prices really to suit customers, while a thick coat can be bought for five dollars, which will last as many years, thick pantaloons for two dollars, cowhide boots for a dollar and a half a pair, a summer hat for a quarter of a dollar, and a winter cap for sixty-two and a half cents, or a better be made at home at a nominal cost, where is he so poor that, clad in such a suit, *of his own earning*, there will not be found wise men to do him reverence?

When I ask for a garment of a particular form, my tailorress⁶⁶ tells me gravely, "They do not make them so now," not emphasizing the "They" at all, as if she quoted an authority as impersonal as the Fates, and I find it difficult to get made what I want, simply because she cannot believe that I mean what I say, that I am so rash. When I hear this oracular sentence, I am for a moment absorbed in thought, emphasizing to myself each word separately that I may come at the meaning of it, that I may find out by what degree of consanguinity *They* are related to *me*, and what authority they may have in an affair which affects me so nearly, and, finally, I am inclined to answer her with equal mystery, and without any more emphasis of the "they,"—"It is true, they did not make them so recently, but they do now." Of what use this measuring of me if she does not measure my character, but only the breadth of my shoulders, as it were a peg to hang the coat on? We worship not the Graces, nor the Parcae, but Fashion. She spins and weaves and cuts with full authority. The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller's cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same. I sometimes despair of getting any thing quite simple and honest done in this world by the help of men. They would have to be passed through a powerful press first, to squeeze their old notions out of them, so that they would not soon get their legs again, and then there would be some one in the company with a maggot in his head, hatched from an egg deposited there nobody knows when, for not even fire kills these things, and you would have lost your labor. Nevertheless, we will not forget

that some Egyptian wheat was handed down to us by a mummy

On the whole, I think that it cannot be maintained that dressing has in this or any country risen to the dignity of an art. At present men make shift to wear what they can get. Like shipwrecked sailors, they put on what they can find on the beach, and at a little distance, whether of space or time, laugh at each other's masquerade. Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new. We are amused at beholding the costume of Henry VIII, or Queen Elizabeth, as much as if it was that of the King and Queen of the Cannibal Islands. All costume off a man is pitiful or grotesque.⁶⁷ It is only the serious eye peering from and the sincere life passed within it, which restrain laughter and consecrate the costume of any people. Let Harlequin be taken with a fit of the colic and his trappings will have to serve that mood too. When the soldier is hit by a cannon ball rags are as becoming as purple.

The childish and savage taste of men and women for new patterns keeps how many shaking and squinting through kaleidoscopes that they may discover the particular figure which this generation requires to-day. The manufacturers have learned that this taste is merely whimsical. Of two patterns which differ only by a few threads more or less of a particular color, the one will be sold readily, the other lie on the shelf, though it frequently happens that after the lapse of a season the latter becomes the most fashionable. Comparatively, tattooing is not the hideous custom which it is called. It is not barbarous merely because the printing is skin-deep and unalterable.

I cannot believe that our factory system is the best mode by which men may get clothing. The condition of the operatives is becoming every day more like that of the English, and it cannot be wondered at, since, as far as I have heard or observed, the principal object is, not that mankind may be well and honestly clad, but, unquestionably, that the corporations may be enriched. In the long run men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high.

As for a Shelter, I will not deny that this is now a necessary of life, though there are instances of men having done without it for long periods in colder countries than this Samuel Laing says that "The Laplander in his skin dress, and in a skin bag which he puts over his head and shoulders, will sleep night after night on the snow — in a degree of cold which would extinguish the life of one exposed to it in any woollen clothing" He had seen them asleep thus Yet he adds, "They are not harder than other people" But, probably, man did not live long on the earth without discovering the convenience which there is in a house, the domestic comforts, which phrase may have originally signified the satisfactions of the house more than of the family, though these must be extremely partial and occasional in those climates where the house is associated in our thoughts with winter or the rainy season chiefly, and two thirds of the year, except for a parasol, is unnecessary In our climate, in the summer, it was formerly almost solely a covering at night In the Indian gazettes a wigwam was the symbol of a day's march, and a row of them cut or painted on the bark of a tree signified that so many times they had camped Man was not made so large limbed and robust but that he must seek to narrow his world, and wall in a space such as fitted him He was at first bare and out of doors, but though this was pleasant enough in serene and warm weather, by daylight, the rainy season and the winter, to say nothing of the torrid sun, would perhaps have nipped his race in the bud if he had not made haste to clothe himself with the shelter of a house Adam and Eve, according to the fable, wore the bower before other clothes Man wanted a home, a place of warmth, or comfort, first of physical warmth, then the warmth of the affections

We may imagine a time when, in the infancy of the human race, some enterprising mortal crept into a hollow in a rock for shelter Every child begins the world again, to some extent, and loves to stay out doors, even in wet and cold It plays house, as well as horse, having an instinct for it Who does not remember the interest with which when young he looked at shelving rocks, or any approach to a cave? It was the natural yearning of that

portion of our most primitive ancestor which still survived in us. From the cave we have advanced to roofs of palm leaves, of bark and boughs, of linen woven and stretched, of grass and straw, of boards and shingles, of stones and tiles. At last, we know not what it is to live in the open air, and our lives are domestic in more senses than we think. From the hearth to the field is a great distance. It would be well perhaps if we were to spend more of our days and nights without any obstruction between us and the celestial bodies, if the poet did not speak so much from under a roof, or the saint dwell there so long. Birds do not sing in caves, nor do doves cherish their innocence in dovecots.

However, if one designs to construct a dwelling house, it behooves him to exercise a little Yankee shrewdness, lest after all he find himself in a workhouse, a labyrinth without a clew, a museum, an almshouse, a prison, or a splendid mausoleum instead. Consider first how slight a shelter is absolutely necessary. I have seen Penobscot Indians, in this town, living in tents of thin cotton cloth, while the snow was nearly a foot deep around them, and I thought that they would be glad to have it deeper to keep out the wind. Formerly, when how to get my living honestly, with freedom left for my proper pursuits, was a question which vexed me even more than it does now, for unfortunately I am become somewhat callous, I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the laborers locked up their tools at night, and it suggested to me that every man who was hard pushed might get such a one for a dollar, and, having bored a few auger holes in it, to admit the air at least, get into it when it rained and at night, and hook down the lid, and so have freedom in his love, and in his soul be free.⁶⁸ This did not appear the worst, nor by any means a despicable alternative. You could sit up as late as you pleased, and, whenever you got up, go abroad without any landlord or house-lord dogging you for rent. Many a man is harassed to death to pay the rent of a larger and more luxurious box who would not have frozen to death in such a box as this. I am far from jesting. Economy is a subject which admits of being

treated with levity, but it cannot so be disposed of. A comfortable house for a rude and hardy race, that lived mostly out of doors, was once made here almost entirely of such materials as Nature furnished ready to their hands. Gookin, who was superintendent of the Indians subject to the Massachusetts Colony, writing in 1674, says, "The best of their houses are covered very neatly, tight and warm, with barks of trees, slipped from their bodies at those seasons when the sap is up, and made into great flakes, with pressure of weighty timber, when they are green. The meaner sort are covered with mats which they make of a kind of bulrush, and are also indifferently tight and warm, but not so good as the former. Some I have seen, sixty or a hundred feet long and thirty feet broad. I have often lodged in their wigwams, and found them as warm as the best English houses." He adds, that they were commonly carpeted and lined within with well-wrought embroidered mats, and were furnished with various utensils. The Indians had advanced so far as to regulate the effect of the wind by a mat suspended over the hole in the roof and moved by a string. Such a lodge was in the first instance constructed in a day or two at most, and taken down and put up in a few hours, and every family owned one, or its apartment in one.

In the savage state every family owns a shelter as good as the best, and sufficient for its coarser and simpler wants, but I think that I speak within bounds when I say that, though the birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their holes, and the savages their wigwams, in modern civilized society not more than one half the families own a shelter. In the large towns and cities, where civilization especially prevails, the number of those who own a shelter is a very small fraction of the whole. The rest pay an annual tax for this outside garment of all, become indispensable summer and winter, which would buy a village of Indian wigwams, but now helps to keep them poor as long as they live. I do not mean to insist here on the disadvantage of hiring compared with owning, but it is evident that the savage owns his shelter because it costs so little, while the civilized man hires his commonly because he cannot afford to own it, nor can he,

in the long run, any better afford to hire But, answers one, by merely paying this tax the poor civilized man secures an abode which is a palace compared with the savage's An annual rent of from twenty-five to a hundred dollars, these are the country rates, entitles him to the benefit of the improvements of centuries, spacious apartments, clean paint and paper, Rumford fireplace,⁶⁹ back plastering, Venetian blinds, copper pump, spring lock, a commodious cellar, and many other things But how happens it that he who is said to enjoy these things is so commonly a *poor* civilized man, while the savage, who has them not, is rich as a savage? If it is asserted that civilization is a real advance in the condition of man,—and I think that it is, though only the wise improve their advantages,—it must be shown that it has produced better dwellings without making them more costly, and the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run An average house in this neighborhood costs perhaps eight hundred dollars, and to lay up this sum will take from ten to fifteen years of the laborer's life, even if he is not encumbered with a family,—estimating the pecuniary value of every man's labor at one dollar a day, for if some receive more, others receive less,—so that he must have spent more than half his life commonly before *his* wigwam will be earned If we suppose him to pay a rent instead, this is but a doubtful choice of evils Would the savage have been wise to exchange his wigwam for a palace on these terms?

It may be guessed that I reduce almost the whole advantage of holding this superfluous property as a fund in store against the future, so far as the individual is concerned, mainly to the defraying of funeral expenses But perhaps a man is not required to bury himself Nevertheless this points to an important distinction between the civilized man and the savage, and, no doubt, they have designs on us for our benefit, in making the life of a civilized people an *institution*, in which the life of the individual is to a great extent absorbed, in order to preserve and perfect that of the race But I wish to show at what a sacrifice this advantage is at present obtained, and to suggest that

we may possibly so live as to secure all the advantage without suffering any of the disadvantage What mean ye by saying that the poor ye have always with you, or that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

"As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel "

"Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine the soul that sinneth it shall die "

When I consider my neighbors, the farmers of Concord, who are at least as well off as the other classes, I find that for the most part they have been toiling twenty, thirty, or forty years, that they may become the real owners of their farms, which commonly they have inherited with encumbrances, or else bought with hired money,—and we may regard one third of that toil as the cost of their houses,—but commonly they have not paid for them yet It is true, the encumbrances sometimes outweigh the value of the farm, so that the farm itself becomes one great encumbrance, and still a man is found to inherit it, being well acquainted with it, as he says On applying to the assessors, I am surprised to learn that they cannot at once name a dozen in the town who own their farms free and clear If you would know the history of these homesteads, inquire at the bank where they are mortgaged The man who has actually paid for his farm with labor on it is so rare that every neighbor can point to him I doubt if there are three such men in Concord What has been said of the merchants, that a very large majority, even ninety-seven in a hundred, are sure to fail, is equally true of the farmers With regard to the merchants, however, one of them says pertinently that a great part of their failures are not genuine pecuniary failures, but merely failures to fulfil their engagements, because it is inconvenient, that is, it is the moral character that breaks down But this puts an infinitely worse face on the matter, and suggests, beside, that probably not even the other three succeed in saving their souls, but are perchance bankrupt in a worse sense than they who fail honestly Bankruptcy and repudiation are the spring-boards from which much of our civilization vaults and turns its somersets, but the savage

stands on the unelastic plank of famine Yet the Middlesex Cattle Show goes off here with *eclat* annually, as if all the joints of the agricultural machine were suent ⁷⁰

The farmer is endeavoring to solve the problem of a livelihood by a formula more complicated than the problem itself To get his shoestrings he speculates in herds of cattle With consummate skill he has set his trap with a hair springe to catch comfort and independence, and then, as he turned away, got his own leg into it This is the reason he is poor, and for a similar reason we are all poor in respect to a thousand savage comforts, though surrounded by luxuries As Chapman sings,—

“The false society of men—
—for earthly greatness
All heavenly comforts rarefies to air ”

And when the farmer has got his house, he may not be the richer but the poorer for it, and it be the house that has got him As I understand it, that was a valid objection urged by Momus against the house which Minerva made, that she “had not made it movable, by which means a bad neighborhood might be avoided,” and it may still be urged, for our houses are such unwieldy property that we are often imprisoned rather than housed in them, and the bad neighborhood to be avoided is our own scurvy selves I know one or two families, at least, in this town, who, for nearly a generation, have been wishing to sell their houses in the outskirts and move into the village, but have not been able to accomplish it, and only death will set them free ⁷¹

Granted that the *majority* are able at last either to own or hire the modern house with all its improvements While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them It has created palaces, but it was not so easy to create noblemen and kings And *if the civilized man's pursuits are no worthier than the savage's, if he is employed the greater part of his life in obtaining gross necessities and comforts merely, why should he have a better dwelling than the former?*

But how do the poor *minority* fare? Perhaps it will be found, that just in proportion as some have been placed in outward circumstances above the savage, others have been degraded below him. The luxury of one class is counterbalanced by the indigence of another. On the one side is the palace, on the other are the almshouse and "silent poor." The myriads who built the pyramids to be the tombs of the Pharaohs were fed on garlic, and it may be were not decently buried themselves. The mason who finishes the cornice of the palace returns at night perchance to a hut not so good as a wigwam. It is a mistake to suppose that, in a country where the usual evidences of civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants may not be as degraded as that of savages. I refer to the degraded poor, not now to the degraded rich. To know this I should not need to look farther than to the shanties which every where border our railroads, that last improvement in civilization, where I see in my daily walks human beings living in sties, and all winter with an open door, for the sake of light, without any visible, often imaginable, wood pile, and the forms of both old and young are permanently contracted by the long habit of shrinking from cold and misery, and the development of all their limbs and faculties is checked. It certainly is fair to look at that class by whose labor the works which distinguish this generation are accomplished. Such too, to a greater or less extent, is the condition of the operatives of every denomination in England, which is the great workhouse of the world. Or I could refer you to Ireland, which is marked as one of the white or enlightened spots on the map. Contrast the physical condition of the Irish with that of the North American Indian, or the South Sea Islander, or any other savage race before it was degraded by contact with the civilized man. Yet I have no doubt that that people's rulers are as wise as the average of civilized rulers. Their condition only proves what squalidness may consist with civilization. I hardly need refer now to the laborers in our Southern States who produce the staple exports of this country, and are themselves a staple production of the South. But to confine myself to those who are said to be in *moderate* circumstances.

Most men appear never to have considered what a house is, and are actually though needlessly poor all their lives because they think that they must have such a one as their neighbors have. As if one were to wear any sort of coat which the tailor might cut out for him, or, gradually leaving off palmleaf hat or cap of woodchuck skin, complain of hard times because he could not afford to buy him a crown! It is possible to invent a house still more convenient and luxurious than we have, which yet all would admit that man could not afford to pay for. Shall we always study to obtain more of these things, and not sometimes to be content with less? Shall the respectable citizen thus gravely teach, by precept and example, the necessity of the young man's providing a certain number of superfluous glowshoes, and umbrellas, and empty guest chambers for empty guests, before he dies? Why should not our furniture be as simple as the Arab's or the Indian's? When I think of the benefactors of the race, whom we have apotheosized as messengers from heaven, bearers of divine gifts to man, I do not see in my mind any retinue at their heels, any car-load of fashionable furniture. Or what if I were to allow—would it not be a singular allowance?—that our furniture should be more complex than the Arab's, in proportion as we are morally and intellectually his superiors! At present our houses are cluttered and defiled with it, and a good housewife would sweep out the greater part into the dust hole, and not leave her morning's work undone. Morning work! By the blushes of Aurora and the music of Memnon,⁷² what should be man's *morning work* in this world? I had three pieces of limestone on my desk, but I was terrified to find that they required to be dusted daily, when the furniture of my mind was all undusted still, and I threw them out the window in disgust. How, then, could I have a furnished house? I would rather sit in the open air, for no dust gathers on the grass, unless where man has broken ground.

It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. The traveller who stops at the best houses, so called, soon discovers this, for the publicans presume him to be a Sardanapalus, and if he resigned himself to

their tender mercies he would soon be completely emasculated I think that in the railroad car we are inclined to spend more on luxury than on safety and convenience, and it threatens without attaining these to become no better than a modern drawing room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sunshades, and a hundred other oriental things, which we are taking west with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be ashamed to know the names of I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way

The very simplicity and nakedness of man's life in the primitive ages imply this advantage at least, that they left him still but a sojourner in nature When he was refreshed with food and sleep he contemplated his journey again He dwelt, as it were, in a tent in this world, and was either threading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing the mountain tops But lo! men have become the tools of their tools The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer, and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a house-keeper We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven We have adopted Christianity merely as an improved method of *agri*-culture We have built for this world a family mansion, and for the next a family tomb The best works of art are the expression of man's struggle to free himself from this condition, but the effect of our art is merely to make this low state comfortable and that higher state to be forgotten There is actually no place in this village for a work of *fine* art, if any had come down to us, to stand, for our lives, our houses and streets, furnish no proper pedestal for it There is not a nail to hang a picture on, nor a shelf to receive the bust of a hero or a saint When I consider how our houses are built and paid for, or not paid for, and their internal economy managed and sustained, I wonder that the floor does not give way under the visitor while he is admiring

the gewgaws upon the mantel-piece, and let him through into the cellar, to some solid and honest though earthy foundation. I cannot but perceive that this so called rich and refined life is a thing jumped at, and I do not get on in the enjoyment of the *fine* arts which adorn it, my attention being wholly occupied with the jump, for I remember that the greatest genuine leap, due to human muscles alone, on record, is that of certain wandering Arabs, who are said to have cleared twenty-five feet on level ground. Without factitious support, man is sure to come to earth again beyond that distance. The first question which I am tempted to put to the proprietor of such great impropriety is, Who bolsters you? Are you one of the ninety-seven who fail, or the three who succeed? Answer me these questions, and then perhaps I may look at your bawbles and find them ornamental. The cart before the horse is neither beautiful nor useful. Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper.

Old Johnson, in his "Wonder-Working Providence,"⁷³ speaking of the first settlers of this town, with whom he was contemporary, tells us that "they burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter under some hillside, and, casting the soil aloft upon timber, they make a smoky fire against the earth, at the highest side." They did not "provide them houses," says he, "till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them," and the first year's crop was so light that "they were forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season." The secretary of the Province of New Netherland,⁷⁴ writing in Dutch, in 1650, for the information of those who wished to take up land there, states more particularly, that "those in New Netherland, and especially in New England, who have no means to build farm houses at first according to their wishes, dig a square pit in the ground, cellar fashion, six or seven feet deep, as long and as broad as they think proper, case the earth inside with wood all round the wall, and line the wood with the bark

of trees or something else to prevent the caving in of the earth, floor this cellar with plank, and wainscot it overhead for a ceiling, raise a roof of spars clear up, and cover the spars with bark or green sods, so that they can live dry and warm in these houses with their entire families for two, three, and four years, it being understood that partitions are run through those cellars which are adapted to the size of the family. The wealthy and principal men in New England, in the beginning of the colonies, commenced their first dwelling houses in this fashion for two reasons, firstly, in order not to waste time in building, and not to want food the next season, secondly, in order not to discourage poor laboring people whom they brought over in numbers from Fatherland. In the course of three or four years, when the country became adapted to agriculture, they built themselves handsome houses, spending on them several thousands."

In this course which our ancestors took there was a show of prudence at least, as if their principle were to satisfy the more pressing wants first. But are the more pressing wants satisfied now? When I think of acquiring for myself one of our luxurious dwellings, I am deterred, for, so to speak, the country is not yet adapted to *human* culture, and we are still forced to cut our *spiritual* bread far thinner than our forefathers did their wheaten. Not that all architectural ornament is to be neglected even in the rudest periods, but let our houses first be lined with beauty, where they come in contact with our lives, like the tenement of the shellfish, and not overlaid with it. But, alas! I have been inside one or two of them, and know what they are lined with.

Though we are not so degenerate but that we might possibly live in a cave or a wigwam or wear skins to-day, it certainly is better to accept the advantages, though so dearly bought, which the invention and industry of mankind offer. In such a neighborhood as this, boards and shingles, lime and bricks, are cheaper and more easily obtained than suitable caves, or whole logs, or bark in sufficient quantities, or even well-tempered clay or flat stones. I speak understandingly on this subject, for I have made myself acquainted with it both theoretically and

practically With a little more wit we might use these materials so as to become richer than the richest now are, and make our civilization a blessing The civilized man is a more experienced and wiser savage But to make haste to my own experiment.

Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond,⁷⁵ nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise The owner of the axe,⁷⁶ as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye, but I returned it sharper than I received it It was a pleasant hillside where I worked, covered with pine woods, through which I looked out on the pond, and a small open field in the woods where pines and hickories were springing up The ice in the pond was not yet dissolved, though there were some open spaces, and it was all dark colored and saturated with water There were some slight flurries of snow during the days that I worked there, but for the most part when I came out on to the railroad, on my way home, its yellow sand heap stretched away gleaming in the hazy atmosphere, and the rails shone in the spring sun, and I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent⁷⁷ was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself One day, when my axe had come off and I had cut a green hickory for a wedge, driving it with a stone, and had placed the whole to soak in a pond hole in order to swell the wood, I saw a striped snake run into the water, and he lay on the bottom, apparently without inconvenience, as long as I staid there, or more than a quarter of an hour, perhaps because he had not yet fairly come out of the torpid state It appeared to me that for a like reason men remain in their present low and primitive condition, but if they should feel the influence of the spring of springs arousing them, they would of necessity rise

to a higher and more ethereal life I had previously seen the snakes in frosty mornings in my path with portions of their bodies still numb and inflexible, waiting for the sun to thaw them On the 1st of April it rained and melted the ice, and in the early part of the day, which was very foggy, I heard a stray goose groping about over the pond and cackling as if lost, or like the spirit of the fog

So I went on for some days cutting and hewing timber, and also studs and rafters, all with my narrow axe, not having many communicable or scholar-like thoughts, singing to myself,—

Men say they know many things,
But lo! they have taken wings,—
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances,
The wind that blows
Is all that any body knows

I hewed the main timbers six inches square, most of the studs on two sides only, and the rafters and floor timbers on one side, leaving the rest of the bark on, so that they were just as straight and much stronger than sawed ones Each stick was carefully mortised or tenoned by its stump, for I had borrowed other tools by this time My days in the woods were not very long ones, yet I usually carried my dinner of bread and butter, and read the newspaper⁷⁸ in which it was wrapped, at noon, sitting amid the green pine boughs which I had cut off, and to my bread was imparted some of their fragrance, for my hands were covered with a thick coat of pitch. Before I had done I was more the friend than the foe of the pine tree, though I had cut down some of them, having become better acquainted with it Sometimes a rambler in the wood was attracted by the sound of my axe, and we chatted pleasantly over the chips which I had made

By the middle of April, for I made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising I had already bought the shanty of James Collins,

an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one. When I called to see it he was not at home. I walked about the outside, at first unobserved from within, the window was so deep and high. It was of small dimensions, with a peaked cottage roof, and not much else to be seen, the dirt being raised five feet all around as if it were a compost heap. The roof was the soundest part, though a good deal warped and made brittle by the sun. Doorsill there was none, but a perennial passage for the hens under the door board. Mrs. C. came to the door and asked me to view it from the inside. The hens were driven in by my approach. It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, dank, clammy, and aguish, only here a board and there a board which would not bear removal. She lighted a lamp to show me the inside of the roof and the walls, and also that the board floor extended under the bed, warning me not to step into the cellar, a sort of dust hole two feet deep. In her own words, they were "good boards overhead, good boards all around, and a good window,"—of two whole squares originally, only the cat had passed out that way lately. There was a stove, a bed, and a place to sit, an infant in the house where it was born, a silk parasol, gilt-framed looking-glass, and a patent new coffee mill nailed to an oak sapling, all told. The bargain was soon concluded, for James had in the mean while returned. I to pay four dollars and twenty-five cents to-night, he to vacate at five to-morrow morning, selling to nobody else meanwhile. I to take possession at six. It were well, he said, to be there early, and anticipate certain indistinct but wholly unjust claims on the score of ground rent and fuel. This he assured me was the only encumbrance. At six I passed him and his family on the road. One large bundle held their all,—bed, coffee-mill, looking-glass, hens,—all but the cat, she took to the woods and became a wild cat, and, as I learned afterward, trod in a trap set for woodchucks, and so became a dead cat at last.

I took down this dwelling the same morning, drawing the nails, and removed it to the pond side by small cartloads, spreading the boards on the grass there to bleach and warp back again.

in the sun. One early thrush gave me a note or two as I drove along the woodland path. I was informed treacherously by a young Patrick that neighbor Seeley, an Irishman, in the intervals of the carting, transferred the still tolerable, straight, and drivable nails, staples, and spikes to his pocket, and then stood when I came back to pass the time of day, and look freshly up, unconcerned, with spring thoughts, at the devastation, there being a dearth of work, as he said. He was there to represent spectatordom, and help make this seemingly insignificant event one with the removal of the gods of Troy.

I dug my cellar in the side of a hill sloping to the south, where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, down through sumach and blackberry roots, and the lowest stain of vegetation, six feet square by seven deep, to a fine sand where potatoes would not freeze in any winter. The sides were left shelving, and not stoned, but the sun having never shone on them, the sand still keeps its place. It was but two hours' work. I took particular pleasure in this breaking of ground, for in almost all latitudes men dig into the earth for an equable temperature. Under the most splendid house in the city is still to be found the cellar where they store their roots as of old, and long after the superstructure has disappeared posterity remark its dent in the earth. The house is still but a sort of porch at the entrance of a burrow.

At length, in the beginning of May, with the help of some of my acquaintances, rather to improve so good an occasion for neighborliness than from any necessity, I set up the frame of my house.⁷⁹ No man was ever more honored in the character of his raisers than I. They are destined, I trust, to assist at the raising of loftier structures one day. I began to occupy my house on the 4th of July, as soon as it was boarded and roofed, for the boards were carefully feather-edged and lapped, so that it was perfectly impervious to rain, but before boarding I laid the foundation of a chimney at one end, bringing two cartloads of stones up the hill from the pond in my arms. I built the chimney after my hoeing in the fall, before a fire became necessary for warmth, doing my cooking in the mean while out of doors on

the ground, early in the morning which mode I still think is in some respects more convenient and agreeable than the usual one When it stormed before my bread was baked, I fixed a few boards over the fire, and sat under them to watch my loaf, and passed some pleasant hours in that way ⁸⁰ In those days, when my hands were much employed, I read but little, but the least scraps of paper which lay on the ground, my holder, or tablecloth, afforded me as much entertainment, in fact answered the same purpose as the *Iliad* ⁸¹

It would be worth the while to build still more deliberately than I did, considering, for instance, what foundation a door, a window, a cellar, a garret, have in the nature of man, and perchance never raising any superstructure until we found a better reason for it than our temporal necessities even There is some of the same fitness in a man's building his own house that there is in a bird's building its own nest Who knows but if men constructed their dwellings with their own hands, and provided food for themselves and families simply and honestly enough, the poetic faculty would be universally developed, as birds universally sing when they are so engaged² But alas! we do like cowbirds and cuckoos, which lay their eggs in nests which other birds have built, and cheer no traveller with their chattering and unmusical notes Shall we forever resign the pleasure of construction to the carpenter² What does architecture amount to in the experience of the mass of men² I never in all my walks came across a man engaged in so simple and natural an occupation as building his house We belong to the community It is not the tailor alone who is the ninth part of a man, it is as much the preacher, and the merchant, and the farmer Where is this division of labor to end² and what object does it finally serve² No doubt another *may* also think for me, but it is not therefore desirable that he should do so to the exclusion of my thinking for myself

True, there are architects so called in this country, and I have heard of one at least possessed with the idea of making architectural ornaments have a core of truth, a necessity, and hence a

beauty, as if it were a revelation to him ⁸² All very well perhaps from his point of view, but only a little better than the common dilettantism. A sentimental reformer in architecture, he began at the cornice, not at the foundation. It was only how to put a core of truth within the ornaments, that every sugar-plum in fact might have an almond or caraway seed in it,—though I hold that almonds are most wholesome without the sugar,—and not how the inhabitant, the indweller, might build truly within and without, and let the ornaments take care of themselves. What reasonable man ever supposed that ornaments were something outward and in the skin merely,—that the tortoise got his spotted shell, or the shellfish its mother-o'-pearl tints, by such a contract as the inhabitants of Broadway their Trinity Church? But a man has no more to do with the style of architecture of his house than a tortoise with that of its shell: nor need the soldier be so idle as to try to paint the precise *color* of his virtue on his standard. The enemy will find it out. He may turn pale when the trial comes. This man seemed to me to lean over the cornice, and timidly whisper his half-truth to the rude occupants who really knew it better than he. What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, ⁸³ who is the only builder,—out of some unconscious truthfulness, and nobleness, without ever a thought for the appearance, and whatever additional beauty of this kind is destined to be produced will be preceded by a like unconscious beauty of life. The most interesting dwellings in this country, as the painter knows, are the most unpretending, humble log huts and cottages of the poor commonly, it is the life of the inhabitants whose shells they are, and not any peculiarity in their surfaces merely, which makes them *picturesque*, and equally interesting will be the citizen's suburban box, when his life shall be as simple and as agreeable to the imagination, and there is as little straining after effect in the style of his dwelling. A great proportion of architectural ornaments are literally hollow, and a September gale would strip them off, like borrowed plumes, without injury to the substantials. They can do without

architecture who have no olives nor wines in the cellar What if an equal ado were made about the ornaments of style in literature, and the architects of our bibles spent as much time about their cornices as the architects of our churches do³ So are made the *belles-lettres* and the *beaux-arts* and their professors Much it concerns a man, forsooth, how a few sticks are slanted over him or under him, and what colors are daubed upon his box It would signify somewhat, if, in any earnest sense, *he* slanted them and daubed it, but the spirit having departed out of the tenant, it is of a piece with constructing his own coffin,—the architecture of the grave, and “carpenter,” is but another name for “coffin-maker” One man says, in his despair or indifference to life, take up a handful of the earth at your feet, and paint your house that color Is he thinking of his last and narrow house³ Toss up a copper for it as well What an abundance of leisure he must have! Why do you take up a handful of dirt³ Better paint your house your own complexion, let it turn pale or blush for you An enterprise to improve the style of cottage architecture! When you have got my ornaments ready I will wear them

Before winter I built a chimney, and shingled the sides of my house, which were already impervious to rain, with imperfect and sappy shingles made of the first slice of the log, whose edges I was obliged to straighten with a plane

I have thus a tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long, and eight-feet posts, with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap doors, one door at the end, and a brick fireplace opposite The exact cost of my house, paying the usual price for such materials as I used, but not counting the work, all of which was done by myself, was as follows, and I give the details because very few are able to tell exactly what their houses cost, and fewer still, if any, the separate cost of the various materials which compose them —

Boards,
Refuse shingles for roof
and sides,

\$8 03½, mostly shanty boards

4 00

Laths,	1 25	
Two second-hand windows		
with glass,	2 43	
One thousand old brick,	4 00	
Two casks of lime,	2 40	That was high
Hair,	0 31	More than I needed
Mantle-tree iron,	0 15	
Nails,	3 90	
Hinges and screws,	0 14	
Latch,	0 10	
Chalk,	0 01	
Transportation,	1 40	{ I carried a good part on my back
In all,	\$28 12½	

These are all the materials excepting the timber, stones and sand, which I claimed by squatter's right. I have also a small wood-shed adjoining, made chiefly of the stuff which was left after building the house.

I intend to build me a house which will surpass any on the main street in Concord in grandeur and luxury, as soon as it pleases me as much and will cost me no more than my present one.

I thus found that the student who wishes for a shelter can obtain one for a lifetime at an expense not greater than the rent which he now pays annually. If I seem to boast more than is becoming, my excuse is that I brag for humanity rather than for myself, and my shortcomings and inconsistencies do not affect the truth of my statement. Notwithstanding much cant and hypocrisy,—chaff which I find it difficult to separate from my wheat, but for which I am as sorry as any man,—I will breathe freely and stretch myself in this respect, it is such a relief to both the moral and physical system, and I am resolved that I will not through humility become the devil's attorney. I will endeavor to speak a good word for the truth. At Cambridge College the mere rent of a student's room, which is only a little larger than my own, is thirty dollars each year, though the corporation

had the advantage of building thirty-two side by side and under one roof, and the occupant suffers the inconvenience of many and noisy neighbors, and perhaps a residence in the fourth story⁸⁴ I cannot but think that if we had more true wisdom in these respects, not only less education would be needed, because, forsooth, more would already have been acquired, but the pecuniary expense of getting an education would in a great measure vanish. Those conveniences which the student requires at Cambridge or elsewhere cost him or somebody else ten times as great a sacrifice of life as they would with proper management on both sides. Those things for which the most money is demanded are never the things which the student most wants. Tuition, for instance, is an important item in the term bill, while for the far more valuable education which he gets by associating with the most cultivated of his contemporaries no charge is made. The mode of founding a college is, commonly, to get up a subscription of dollars and cents, and then following blindly the principles of a division of labor to its extreme, a principle which should never be followed but with circumspection,—to call in a contractor who makes this a subject of speculation, and he employs Irishmen or other operatives actually to lay the foundations, while the students that are to be are said to be fitting themselves for it, and for these oversights successive generations have to pay. I think that it would be *better than this*, for the students, or those who desire to be benefited by it, even to lay the foundation themselves. The student who secures his coveted leisure and retirement by systematically shirking any labor necessary to man obtains but an ignoble and unprofitable leisure, defrauding himself of the experience which alone can make leisure fruitful. “But,” says one, “you do not mean that the students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?” I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that, I mean that they should not *play* life, or *study* it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly *live* it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment

of living? Methinks this would exercise their minds as much as mathematics. If I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences, for instance, I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where any thing is professed and practised but the art of life,—to survey the world through a telescope or a microscope, and never with his natural eye, to study chemistry, and not learn how his bread is made, or mechanics, and not learn how it is earned, to discover new satellites to Neptune, and not detect the moles in his eyes, or to what vagabond he is a satellite himself, or to be devoured by the monsters that swarm all around him, while contemplating the monsters in a drop of vinegar. Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month,—the boy who had made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelted, reading as much as would be necessary for this,—or the boy who had attended the lectures on metallurgy at the Institute in the mean while, and had received a Rogers' penknife⁸⁵ from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers? To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation!¹—why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I should have known more about it. Even the *poor* student studies and is taught only *political* economy, while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges. The consequence is, that while he is reading Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Say, he runs his father in debt irretrievably.

As with our colleges, so with a hundred "modern improvements," there is an illusion about them, there is not always a positive advance. The devil goes on exacting compound interest to the last for his early share and numerous succeeding investments in them. Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at, as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas,⁸⁶ but Maine and Texas, it may

be, have nothing important to communicate. Either is in such a predicament as the man who was earnest to be introduced to a distinguished deaf woman,⁸⁷ but when he was presented, and one end of her ear trumpet was put into his hand, had nothing to say. As if the main object were to talk fast and not to talk sensibly. We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the old world some weeks nearer to the new, but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that the Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough. After all, the man whose horse trots a mile in a minute does not carry the most important messages, he is not an evangelist, nor does he come round eating locusts and wild honey. I doubt if Flying Childers⁸⁸ ever carried a peck of corn to mill.

One says to me, "I wonder that you do not lay up money, you love to travel, you might take the cars and go to Fitchburg to-day and see the country." But I am wiser than that. I have learned that the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot. I say to my friend, Suppose we try who will get there first. The distance is thirty miles, the fare ninety cents. That is almost a day's wages. I remember when wages were sixty cents a day for laborers on this very road. Well, I start now on foot, and get there before night, I have travelled at that rate by the week together. You will in the mean while have earned your fare, and arrive there some time to-morrow, or possibly this evening, if you are lucky enough to get a job in season. Instead of going to Fitchburg, you will be working here the greater part of the day. And so, if the railroad reached round the world, I think that I should keep ahead of you, and as for seeing the country and getting experience of that kind, I should have to cut your acquaintance altogether.

Such is the universal law, which no man can ever outwit, and with regard to the railroad even we may say it is as broad as it is long. To make a railroad round the world available to all mankind is equivalent to grading the whole surface of the planet. Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough all will at length

ride somewhere, in next to no time, and for nothing, but though a crowd rushes to the depot, and the conductor shouts "All aboard!" when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed, it will be perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over,—and it will be called, and will be, "A melancholy accident." No doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare, that is, if they survive so long, but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time. This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it, reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet. He should have gone up garret at once. "What!" exclaim a million Irishmen starting up from all the shanties in the land, "is not this railroad which we have built a good thing?" Yes, I answer, *comparatively* good, that is, you might have done worse, but I wish, as you are brothers of mine, that you could have spent your time better than digging in this dirt.

Before I finished my house, wishing to earn ten or twelve dollars by some honest and agreeable method, in order to meet my unusual expenses, I planted about two acres and a half of light and sandy soil near it chiefly with beans,⁸⁹ but also a small part with potatoes, corn, peas, and turnips. The whole lot contains eleven acres, mostly growing up to pines and hickories, and was sold the preceding season for eight dollars and eight cents an acre. One farmer said that it was "good for nothing but to raise cheeping squirrels on." I put no manure whatever on this land, not being the owner, but merely a squatter, and not expecting to cultivate so much again, and I did not quite hoe it all once. I got out several cords of stumps in ploughing, which supplied me with fuel for a long time, and left small circles of virgin mould, easily distinguishable through the summer by the greater luxuriance of the beans there. The dead and for the most part unmerchantable wood behind my house, and the driftwood from the pond, have supplied the remainder

of my fuel I was obliged to hire a team and a man for the ploughing, though I held the plough myself. My farm outgoes for the first season were, for implements, seed, work, &c., \$14 72½. The seed corn was given me. This never costs any thing to speak of, unless you plant more than enough. I got twelve bushels of beans, and eighteen bushels of potatoes, beside some peas and sweet corn. The yellow corn and turnips were too late to come to any thing. My whole income from the farm was

	\$23 44
Deducting the outgoes,	14 72½
There are left,	\$ 8 71½,

beside produce consumed and on hand at the time this estimate was made of the value of \$4 50,—the amount on hand much more than balancing a little grass which I did not raise. All things considered, that is, considering the importance of a man's soul and of to-day, notwithstanding the short time occupied by my experiment, nay, partly even because of its transient character, I believe that that was doing better than any farmer in Concord did that year.

The next year I did better still, for I spaded up all the land which I required, about a third of an acre, and I learned from the experience of both years, not being in the least awed by many celebrated works on husbandry, Arthur Young⁹⁰ among the rest, that if one would live simply and eat only the crop which he raised, and raise no more than he ate, and not exchange it for an insufficient quantity of more luxurious and expensive things, he would need to cultivate only a few rods of ground, and that it would be cheaper to spade up that than to use oxen to plough it, and to select a fresh spot from time to time than to manure the old, and he could do all his necessary farm work as it were with his left hand at odd hours in the summer, and thus he would not be tied to an ox, or horse, or cow, or pig, as at present. I desire to speak impartially on this point, and as one not interested in the success or failure of the present economical and social arrangements. I was more independent than any

farmer in Concord, for I was not anchored to a house or farm, but could follow the bent of my genius, which is a very crooked one, every moment. Beside being better off than they already, if my house had been burned or my crops had failed, I should have been nearly as well off as before.

I am wont to think that men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are the keepers of men, the former are so much the freer. Men and oxen exchange work, but if we consider necessary work only, the oxen will be seen to have greatly the advantage, their farm is so much the larger. Man does some of his part of the exchange work in his six weeks of haying, and it is no boy's play. Certainly no nation that lived simply in all respects, that is, no nation of philosophers, would commit so great a blunder as to use the labor of animals. True, there never was and is not likely soon to be a nation of philosophers, nor am I certain it is desirable that there should be. However, I should never have broken a horse or bull and taken him to board for any work he might do for me, for fear I should become a horse-man or a herds-man merely, and if society seems to be the gainer by so doing, are we certain that what is one man's gain is not another's loss, and that the stable-boy has equal cause with his master to be satisfied? Granted that some public works would not have been constructed without this aid, and let man share the glory of such with the ox and horse, does it follow that he could not have accomplished works yet more worthy of himself in that case? When men begin to do, not merely unnecessary or artistic, but luxurious and idle work, with their assistance, it is inevitable that a few do all the exchange work with the oxen, or, in other words, become the slaves of the strongest. Man thus not only works for the animal within him, but, for a symbol of this, he works for the animal without him. Though we have many substantial houses of brick or stone, the prosperity of the farmer is still measured by the degree to which the barn overshadows the house. This town is said to have the largest houses for oxen, cows, and horses hereabouts, and it is not behindhand in its public buildings, but there are very few halls for free worship or free speech in this county. It should

not be by their architecture, but why not even by their power of abstract thought, that nations should seek to commemorate themselves? How much more admirable the Bhagvat-Geeta than all the ruins of the East! Towers and temples are the luxury of princes. A simple and independent mind does not toil at the bidding of any prince. Genius is not a retainer to any emperor, nor is its material silver, or gold, or marble, except to a trifling extent. To what end, pray, is so much stone hammered? In Arcadia, when I was there, I did not see any hammering stone. Nations are possessed with an insane ambition to perpetuate the memory of themselves by the amount of hammered stone they leave. What if equal pains were taken to smooth and polish their manners? One piece of good sense would be more memorable than a monument as high as the moon. I love better to see stones in place. The grandeur of Thebes was a vulgar grandeur. More sensible is a rod of stone wall that bounds an honest man's field than a hundred-gated Thebes that has wandered farther from the true end of life. The religion and civilization which are barbaric and heathenish build splendid temples, but what you might call Christianity does not. Most of the stone a nation hammers goes toward its tomb only. It buries itself alive. As for the Pyramids, there is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing a tomb for some ambitious booby, whom it would have been wiser and manlier to have drowned in the Nile, and then given his body to the dogs. I might possibly invent some excuse for them and him, but I have no time for it. As for the religion and love of art of the builders, it is much the same all the world over, whether the building be an Egyptian temple or the United States Bank. It costs more than it comes to. The mainspring is vanity, assisted by the love of garlic and bread and butter. Mr. Balcom, a promising young architect, designs it on the back of his Vitruvius, with hard pencil and ruler, and the job is let out to Dobson & Sons, stonecutters. When the thirty centuries begin to look down on it,⁹¹ mankind begin to look up at it. As for your high towers and monuments, there was a crazy

fellow once in this town who undertook to dig through to China, and he got so far that, as he said, he heard the Chinese pots and kettles rattle, but I think that I shall not go out of my way to admire the hole which he made. Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and the East,—to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them,—who were above such trifling. But to proceed with my statistics.

By surveying, carpentry, and day-labor of various other kinds in the village in the mean while, for I have as many trades as fingers, I had earned \$13 34. The expense of food for eight months, namely, from July 4th to March 1st, the time when these estimates were made, though I lived there more than two years,—not counting potatoes, a little green corn, and some peas, which I had raised, nor considering the value of what was on hand at the last date, was

Rice,	\$1 73½		
Molasses,	1 73	Cheapest form of the saccharine	
Rye meal,	1 04¾		
Indian meal,	0 99¾	Cheaper than rye	
Pork,	0 22		
Flour,	0 88	Costs more than Indian meal, both money and trouble	All experiments which failed
Sugar,	0 80		
Lard,	0 65		
Apples,	0 25		
Dried apple,	0 22		
Sweet potatoes,	0 10		
One pumpkin,	0 6		
One watermelon,	0 2		
Salt,	0 3		

Yes, I did eat \$8 74, all told, but I should not thus unblushingly publish my guilt, if I did not know that most of my readers were equally guilty with myself, and that their deeds would look no better in print. The next year I sometimes caught a

mess of fish for my dinner, and once I went so far as to slaughter a woodchuck which ravaged my bean-field,—effect his transmigration, as a Tartar would say,—and devour him, partly for experiment's sake, but though it afforded me a momentary enjoyment, notwithstanding a musky flavor, I saw that the longest use would not make that a good practice, however it might seem to have your woodchucks ready dressed by the village butcher

Clothing and some incidental expenses within the same dates, though little can be inferred from this item, amounted to

	\$8 40 $\frac{3}{4}$
Oil and some household utensils,	2 00

So that all the pecuniary outgoes, excepting for washing and mending, which for the most part were done out of the house, and their bills have not yet been received,—and these are all and more than all the ways by which money necessarily goes out in this part of the world,—were

House,	\$28 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁹²
Farm one year,	14 72 $\frac{1}{2}$
Food eight months,	8 74
Clothing, &c, eight months,	8 40 $\frac{3}{4}$
Oil, &c, eight months,	2 00
In all,	<u>\$61 99$\frac{3}{4}$</u>

I address myself now to those of my readers who have a living to get And to meet this I have for farm produce sold

	\$23 44
Earned by day-labor,	13 34
In all,	<u>\$36 78,</u>

which subtracted from the sum of the outgoes leaves a balance of \$25 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ on the one side,—this being very nearly the means with which I started, and the measure of expenses to be incurred, —and on the other, beside the leisure and independence and

health thus secured, a comfortable house for me as long as I choose to occupy it

These statistics, however accidental and therefore uninformative they may appear, as they have a certain completeness, have a certain value also. Nothing was given me of which I have not rendered some account. It appears from the above estimate, that my food alone cost me in money about twenty-seven cents a week. It was, for nearly two years after this, rye and Indian meal without yeast, potatoes, rice, a very little salt pork, molasses, and salt, and my drink water. It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who loved so well the philosophy of India. To meet the objections of some inveterate cavillers, I may as well state, that if I dined out occasionally,⁹³ as I always had done, and I trust shall have opportunities to do again, it was frequently to the detriment of my domestic arrangements. But the dining out, being, as I have stated, a constant element, does not in the least affect a comparative statement like this.

I learned from my two years' experience that it would cost incredibly little trouble to obtain one's necessary food, even in this latitude, that a man may use as simple a diet as the animals, and yet retain health and strength. I have made a satisfactory dinner, satisfactory on several accounts, simply off a dish of purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled and salted. I give the Latin on account of the savoriness of the trivial name. And pray what more can a reasonable man desire, in peaceful times, in ordinary noons, than a sufficient number of ears of green sweet-corn boiled, with the addition of salt? Even the little variety which I used was a yielding to the demands of appetite, and not of health. Yet men have come to such a pass that they frequently starve, not for want of necessities, but for want of luxuries, and I know a good woman who thinks that her son lost his life because he took to drinking water only.

The reader will perceive that I am treating the subject rather from an economic than a dietetic point of view, and he will not venture to put my abstemiousness to the test unless he has a well-stocked larder.

Bread I at first made of pure Indian meal and salt, genuine hoe-cakes, which I baked before my fire out of doors on a shingle or the end of a stick of timber sawed off in building my house, but it was wont to get smoked and to have a piny flavor I tried flour also, but have at last found a mixture of rye and Indian meal most convenient and agreeable. In cold weather it was no little amusement to bake several small loaves of this in succession, tending and turning them as carefully as an Egyptian his hatching eggs⁹⁴. They were a real cereal fruit which I ripened, and they had to my senses a fragrance like that of other noble fruits, which I kept in as long as possible by wrapping them in cloths. I made a study of the ancient and indispensable art of bread-making, consulting such authorities as offered, going back to the primitive days and first invention of the unleavened kind, when from the wildness of nuts and meats men first reached the mildness and refinement of this diet, and traveling gradually down in my studies through that accidental souring of the dough which, it is supposed, taught the leavening process, and through the various fermentations thereafter, till I came to "good, sweet, wholesome bread," the staff of life. Leaven, which some deem the soul of bread, the *spiritus* which fills its cellular tissue, which is religiously preserved like the vestal fire,—some precious bottle-full, I suppose, first brought over in the Mayflower, did the business for America, and its influence is still rising, swelling, spreading, in cerealian billows over the land,—this seed I regularly and faithfully procured from the village, till at length one morning I forgot the rules, and scalded my yeast, by which accident I discovered that even this was not indispensable,—for my discoveries were not by the synthetic but analytic process,—and I have gladly omitted it since, though most housewives earnestly assured me that safe and wholesome bread without yeast might not be, and elderly people prophesied a speedy decay of the vital forces. Yet I find it not to be an essential ingredient, and after going without it for a year am still in the land of the living, and I am glad to escape the trivialness of carrying a bottle-full in my pocket, which would sometimes pop and discharge its contents to my discom-

fiture It is simpler and more respectable to omit it Man is an animal who more than any other can adapt himself to all climates and circumstances Neither did I put any sal soda, or other acid or alkali, into my bread It would seem that I made it according to the recipe which Marcus Porcius Cato gave about two centuries before Christ ⁹⁰ "Panem depsticum sic facito Manus mortariumque bene lavato Farinam in mortarium indito, aquæ paulatim addito, subigitoque pulchre Ubi bene subegeris, defingito, coquitoque sub testu" Which I take to mean—"Make kneaded bread thus Wash your hands and trough well Put the meal into the trough, add water gradually, and knead it thoroughly When you have kneaded it well, mould it, and bake it under a cover," that is, in a baking-kettle Not a word about leaven But I did not always use this staff of life At one time, owing to the emptiness of my purse, I saw none of it for more than a month

Every New Englander might easily raise all his own bread-stuffs in this land of rye and Indian corn, and not depend on distant and fluctuating markets for them Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that, in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store I saw that I could easily raise my bushel or two of rye and Indian corn, for the former will grow on the poorest land, and the latter does not require the best, and grind them in a hand-mill, and so do without rice and pork, and if I must have some concentrated sweet, I found by experiment that I could make a very good molasses either of pumpkins or beets, and I knew that I needed only to set out a few maples to obtain it more easily still, and while these were growing I could use various substitutes beside those which I have named "For," as the Forefathers sang,—

"we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips" ⁹⁶

Finally, as for salt, that grossest of groceries, to obtain this might be a fit occasion for a visit to the seashore, or, if I did without it altogether, I should probably drink the less water. I do not learn that the Indians ever troubled themselves to go after it.

Thus I could avoid all trade and barter, so far as my food was concerned, and having a shelter already, it would only remain to get clothing and fuel. The pantaloons which I now wear were woven in a farmer's family,—thank Heaven there is so much virtue still in man, for I think the fall from the farmer to the operative as great and memorable as that from the man to the farmer,—and in a new country fuel is an encumbrance. As for a habitat, if I were not permitted still to squat, I might purchase one acre at the same price for which the land I cultivated was sold—namely, eight dollars and eight cents. But as it was, I considered that I enhanced the value of the land by squatting on it.

There is a certain class of unbelievers who sometimes ask me such questions as, if I think that I can live on vegetable food alone, and to strike at the root of the matter at once,—for the root is faith,—I am accustomed to answer such, that I can live on board nails. If they cannot understand that, they cannot understand much that I have to say. For my part, I am glad to hear of experiments of this kind being tried, as that a young man tried for a fortnight to live on hard, raw corn on the ear, using his teeth for all mortar. The squirrel tribe tried the same and succeeded. The human race is interested in these experiments, though a few old women who are incapacitated for them, or who own their thirds in mills, may be alarmed.

My furniture, part of which I made myself, and the rest cost me nothing of which I have not rendered an account, consisted of a bed, a table, a desk, three chairs, a looking-glass three inches in diameter, a pair of tongs and andirons, a kettle, a skillet, and a frying-pan, a dipper, a wash-bowl, two knives and forks, three plates, one cup, one spoon, a jug for oil, a jug for molasses, and a japanned lamp. None is so poor that he need

sit on a pumpkin That is shiftlessness There is a plenty of such chairs as I like best in the village garrets to be had for taking them away Furniture! Thank God, I can sit and I can stand without the aid of a furniture warehouse What man but a philosopher would not be ashamed to see his furniture packed in a cart and going up country exposed to the light of heaven and the eyes of men, a beggarly account of empty boxes? That is Spaulding's furniture I could never tell from inspecting such a load whether it belonged to a so called rich man or a poor one, the owner always seemed poverty-stricken Indeed, the more you have of such things the poorer you are Each load looks as if it contained the contents of a dozen shanties, and if one shanty is poor, this is a dozen times as poor Pray, for what do we *move* ever but to get rid of our furniture, our *exuviae*, at last to go from this world to another newly furnished, and leave this to be burned? It is the same as if all these traps were buckled to a man's belt, and he could not move over the rough country where our lines are cast without dragging them,—dragging his trap He was a lucky fox that left his tail in the trap The muskrat will gnaw his third leg off to be free⁹⁷ No wonder man has lost his elasticity How often he is at a dead set! "Sir, if I may be so bold, what do you mean by a dead set?" If you are a seer, whenever you meet a man you will see all that he owns, ay, and much that he pretends to disown, behind him, even to his kitchen furniture and all the trumpery which he saves and will not burn, and he will appear to be harnessed to it and making what headway he can I think that the man is at a dead set who has got through a knot hole or gateway where his sledge load of furniture cannot follow him I cannot but feel compassion when I hear some trig, compact-looking man, seemingly free, all girded and ready, speak of his "furniture," as whether it is insured or not "But what shall I do with my furniture?" My gay butterfly is entangled in a spider's web then Even those who seem for a long while not to have any, if you inquire more narrowly you will find have some stored in somebody's barn I look upon England to-day as an old gentleman who is travelling with a great deal of baggage, trumpery

which has accumulated from long housekeeping, which he has not the courage to burn, great trunk, little trunk, bandbox and bundle Throw away the first three at least It would surpass the powers of a well man nowadays to take up his bed and walk, and I should certainly advise a sick one to lay down his bed and run When I have met an immigrant tottering under a bundle which contained his all—looking like an enormous wen which had grown out of the nape of his neck—I have pitied him, not because that was his all, but because he had all *that* to carry If I have got to drag my trap, I will take care that it be a light one and do not nip me in a vital part But perchance it would be wisest never to put one's paw into it

I would observe, by the way, that it costs me nothing for curtains, for I have no gazers to shut out but the sun and moon, and I am willing that they should look in The moon will not sour milk nor taint meat of mine, nor will the sun injure my furniture or fade my carpet, and if he is sometimes too warm a friend, I find it still better economy to retreat behind some curtain which nature has provided, than to add a single item to the details of housekeeping A lady once offered me a mat, but as I had no room to spare within the house, nor time to spare within or without to shake it, I declined it, preferring to wipe my feet on the sod before my door It is best to avoid the beginnings of evil

Not long since I was present at the auction of a deacon's effects, for his life had not been ineffectual —

“The evil that men do lives after them ”

As usual, a great proportion was trumpery which had begun to accumulate in his father's day Among the rest was a dried tape-worm And now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust holes, these things were not burned, instead of a *bonfire*, or purifying destruction of them, there was an *auction*, or increasing of them The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, bought them all, and carefully transported them to their garrets and dust holes, to lie there till their estates are settled when they will start again When a man dies he kicks the dust

The customs of some savage nations might, perchance, be profitably imitated by us, for they at least go through the semblance of casting their slough annually, they have the idea of the thing, whether they have the reality or not. Would it not be well if we were to celebrate such a "busk," or "feast of first fruits," as Bartram⁹⁸ describes to have been the custom of the Mucclasse Indians? "When a town celebrates the busk," says he, "having previously provided themselves with new clothes, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town, of their filth, which with all the remaining grain and other old provisions they cast together into one common heap, and consume it with fire. After having taken medicine, and fasted for three days, all the fire in the town is extinguished. During this fast they abstain from the gratification of every appetite and passion whatever. A general amnesty is proclaimed, all malefactors may return to their town —"⁹⁹

"On the fourth morning, the high priest, by rubbing dry wood together, produces new fire in the public square, from whence every habitation in the town is supplied with the new and pure flame."¹⁰⁰

They then feast on the new corn and fruits and dance and sing for three days, "and the four following days they receive visits and rejoice with their friends from neighboring towns who have in like manner purified and prepared themselves."

The Mexicans¹⁰¹ also practised a similar purification at the end of every fifty-two years, in the belief that it was time for the world to come to an end.

I have scarcely heard of a truer sacrament, that is, as the dictionary defines it, "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," than this, and I have no doubt that they were originally inspired directly from Heaven to do thus, though they have no biblical record of the revelation.

For more than five years I maintained myself thus solely by the labor of my hands, and I found, that by working about six

weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living. The whole of my winters, as well as most of my summers, I had free and clear for study. I have thoroughly tried school-keeping, and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income, for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe, accordingly, and I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the good of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade, but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil. I was actually afraid that I might by that time be doing what is called a good business. When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries, that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice,—for my greatest skill has been to want but little,—so little capital it required, so little distraction from my wonted moods, I foolishly thought. While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions, I contemplated this occupation as most like theirs, ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way, and thereafter carelessly dispose of them, so, to keep the flocks of Admetus. I also dreamed that I might gather the wild herbs, or carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods, even to the city, by hay-cart loads. But I have since learned that trade curses every thing it handles, and though you trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.

As I preferred some things to others, and especially valued my freedom, as I could fare hard and yet succeed well, I did not wish to spend my time in earning rich carpets or other fine furniture, or delicate cookery, or a house in the Grecian or the Gothic style just yet. If there are any to whom it is no interruption to acquire these things, and who know how to use them when acquired, I relinquish to them the pursuit. Some are “industrious,” and appear to love labor for its own sake, or

perhaps because it keeps them out of worse mischief, to such I have at present nothing to say. Those who would not know what to do with more leisure than they now enjoy, I might advise to work twice as hard as they do,—work till they pay for themselves, and get their free papers. For myself I found that the occupation of a day-laborer was the most independent of any, especially as it required only thirty or forty days in a year to support one. The laborer's day ends with the going down of the sun, and he is then free to devote himself to his chosen pursuit, independent of his labor, but his employer, who speculates from month to month, has no respite from one end of the year to the other.

In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime,¹⁰² if we will live simply and wisely, as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial. It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do.

One young man of my acquaintance, who has inherited some acres, told me that he thought he should live as I did, *if he had the means*. I would not have any one adopt *my* mode of living on any account, for, beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself, I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible, but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own* way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead. The youth may build or plant or sail, only let him not be hindered from doing that which he tells me he would like to do. It is by a mathematical point only that we are wise, as the sailor or the fugitive slave keeps the polestar in his eye, but that is sufficient guidance for all our life. We may not arrive at our port within a calculable period, but we would preserve the true course.

Undoubtedly, in this case, what is true for one is truer still for a thousand, as a large house is not proportionally more expensive than a small one, since one roof may cover, one cellar underlie, and one wall separate several apartments. But for my

part, I preferred the solitary dwelling. Moreover, it will commonly be cheaper to build the whole yourself than to convince another of the advantage of the common wall, and when you have done this, the common partition, to be much cheaper, must be a thin one, and that other may prove a bad neighbor, and also not keep his side in repair. The only cooperation which is commonly possible is exceedingly partial and superficial, and what little true cooperation there is, is as if it were not, being a harmony inaudible to men. If a man has faith he will cooperate with equal faith every where, if he has not faith, he will continue to live like the rest of the world, whatever company he is joined to. To cooperate, in the highest as well as the lowest sense, means *to get our living together*. I heard it proposed lately that two young men should travel together over the world, the one without money, earning his means as he went, before the mast and behind the plough, the other carrying a bill of exchange in his pocket. It was easy to see that they could not long be companions or cooperate, since one would not *operate* at all. They would part at the first interesting crisis in their adventures. Above all, as I have implied, the man who goes alone can start to-day, but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off.

But all this is very selfish, I have heard some of my townsmen say. I confess that I have hitherto indulged very little in philanthropic enterprises. I have made some sacrifices to a sense of duty, and among others have sacrificed this pleasure also. There are those who have used all their arts to persuade me to undertake the support of some poor family in the town, and if I had nothing to do,—for the devil finds employment for the idle,—I might try my hand at some such pastime as that. However, when I have thought to indulge myself in this respect, and lay their Heaven under an obligation by maintaining certain poor persons in all respects as comfortably as I maintain myself, and have even ventured so far as to make them the offer, they have one and all unhesitatingly preferred to remain poor. While my

townsmen and women are devoted in so many ways to the good of their fellows, I trust that one at least may be spared to other and less humane pursuits. You must have a genius for charity as well as for any thing else. As for Doing-good, that is one of the professions which are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution. Probably I should not consciously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation, and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it. But I would not stand between any man and his genius, and to him who does this work, which I decline, with his whole heart and soul and life, I would say, Persevere, even if the world call it doing evil, as it is most likely they will ¹⁰³

I am far from supposing that my case is a peculiar one, no doubt many of my readers would make a similar defence. At doing something,—I will not engage that my neighbors shall pronounce it good,—I do not hesitate to say that I should be a capital fellow to hire, but what that is, it is for my employer to find out. What *good* I do, in the common sense of that word, must be aside from my main path, and for the most part wholly unintended. Men say, practically, Begin where you are and such as you are, without aiming mainly to become of more worth, and with kindness aforethought go about doing good. If I were to preach at all in this strain, I should say rather, Set about being good. As if the sun should stop when he had kindled his fires up to the splendor of a moon or a star of the sixth magnitude, and go about like a Robin Goodfellow, peeping in at every cottage window, inspiring lunatics, and tainting meats, and making darkness visible, instead of steadily increasing his genial heat and beneficence till he is of such brightness that no mortal can look him in the face, and then, and in the mean while too, going about the world in his own orbit, doing it good, or rather, as a truer philosophy has discovered, the world going about him getting good. When Phaeton, wishing to prove his heavenly birth by his beneficence, had the sun's

chariot but one day, and drove out of the beaten track, he burned several blocks of houses in the lower streets of heaven, and scorched the surface of the earth, and dried up every spring, and made the great desert of Sahara, till at length Jupiter hurled him headlong to the earth with a thunderbolt, and the sun, through grief at his death, did not shine for a year

There is no odor so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted. It is human, it is divine, carrion. If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life, as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoom, which fills the mouth and nose and ears and eyes with dust till you are suffocated, for fear that I should get some of his good done to me,—some of its virus mingled with my blood. No,—in this case I would rather suffer evil the natural way. A man is not a good *man* to me because he will feed me if I should be starving, or warm me if I should be freezing, or pull me out of a ditch if I should ever fall into one. I can find you a Newfoundland dog that will do as much. Philanthropy is not love for one's fellow-man in the broadest sense. Howard was no doubt an exceedingly kind and worthy man in his way, and has his reward, but, comparatively speaking, what are a hundred Howards to *us*, if their philanthropy do not help *us* in our best estate, when we are most worthy to be helped? I never heard of a philanthropic meeting in which it was sincerely proposed to do any good to me, or the like of me.

The Jesuits were quite balked by those Indians who, being burned at the stake, suggested new modes of torture to their tormentors. Being superior to physical suffering, it sometimes chanced that they were superior to any consolation which the missionaries could offer, and the law to do as you would be done by fell with less persuasiveness on the ears of those, who, for their part, did not care how they were done by, who loved their enemies after a new fashion, and came very near freely forgiving them all they did.

Be sure that you give the poor the aid they most need, though it be your example which leaves them far behind. If you give

money, spend yourself with it, and do not merely abandon it to them. We make curious mistakes sometimes. Often the poor man is not so cold and hungry as he is dirty and ragged and gross. It is partly his taste, and not merely his misfortune. If you give him money, he will perhaps buy more rags with it. I was wont to pity the clumsy Irish laborers who cut ice on the pond, in such mean and ragged clothes, while I shivered in my more tidy and somewhat more fashionable garments, till, one bitter cold day, one who had slipped into the water came to my house to warm him, and I saw him strip off three pairs of pants and two pairs of stockings ere he got down to the skin, though they were dirty and ragged enough, it is true, and that he could afford to refuse the *extra* garments which I offered him, he had so many *intra* ones. This ducking was the very thing he needed. Then I began to pity myself, and I saw that it would be a greater charity to bestow on me a flannel shirt than a whole slop-shop on him. There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root, and it may be that he who bestows the largest amount of time and money on the needy is doing the most by his mode of life to produce that misery which he strives in vain to relieve. It is the pious slave-breeder devoting the proceeds of every tenth slave to buy a Sunday's liberty for the rest. Some show their kindness to the poor by employing them in their kitchens. Would they not be kinder if they employed themselves there? You boast of spending a tenth part of your income in charity, may be you should spend the nine tenths so, and done with it. Society recovers only a tenth part of the property then. Is this owing to the generosity of him in whose possession it is found, or to the remissness of the officers of justice?

Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind. Nay, it is greatly overrated, and it is our selfishness which overrates it. A robust poor man, one sunny day here in Concord, praised a fellow-townsmen to me, because, as he said, he was kind to the poor, meaning himself. The kind uncles and aunts of the race are more esteemed than its true spiritual fathers and mothers. I once heard a reverend

lecturer on England, a man of learning and intelligence, after enumerating her scientific, literary, and political worthies, Shakspeare, Bacon, Cromwell, Milton, Newton, and others, speak next of her Christian heroes, whom, as if his profession required it of him, he elevated to a place far above all the rest, as the greatest of the great. They were Penn,¹⁰⁴ Howard,¹⁰⁵ and Mrs Fry¹⁰⁶. Every one must feel the falsehood and cant of this. The last were not England's best men and women, only, perhaps, her best philanthropists.

I would not subtract any thing from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their lives and works are a blessing to mankind. I do not value chiefly a man's uprightness and benevolence, which are, as it were, his stem and leaves. Those plants of whose greenness withered we make herb tea for the sick, serve but a humble use, and are most employed by quacks. I want the flower and fruit of a man, that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious. This is a charity that hides a multitude of sins. The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own cast-off griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our despair, our health and ease, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by contagion. From what southern plains comes up the voice of wailing? Under what latitudes reside the heathen to whom we would send light? Who is that intemperate and brutal man whom we would redeem? If any thing ail a man, so that he does not perform his functions, if he have a pain in his bowels even,—for that is the seat of sympathy,—he forthwith sets about reforming—the world. Being a microcosm himself, he discovers, and it is a true discovery, and he is the man to make it,—that the world has been eating green apples, to his eyes, in fact, the globe itself is a great green apple, which there is danger awful to think of that the children of men will nibble before it is ripe, and straightway his drastic philanthropy seeks out the

Esquimaux and the Patagonian, and embraces the populous Indian and Chinese villages, and thus, by a few years of philanthropic activity, the powers in the mean while using him for their own ends, no doubt, he cures himself of his dyspepsia, the globe acquires a faint blush on one or both of its cheeks, as if it were beginning to be ripe, and life loses its crudity and is once more sweet and wholesome to live. I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself.

I believe that what so saddens the reformer is not his sympathy with his fellows in distress, but, though he be the holiest son of God, is his private ail. Let this be righted, let the spring come to him, the morning rise over his couch, and he will forsake his generous companions without apology. My excuse for not lecturing against the use of tobacco is, that I never chewed it, that is a penalty which reformed tobacco-chewers have to pay, though there are things enough I have chewed, which I could lecture against. If you should ever be betrayed into any of these philanthropies, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, for it is not worth knowing. Rescue the drowning and tie your shoe-strings. Take your time, and set about some free labor.

Our manners have been corrupted by communication with the saints. Our hymn-books resound with a melodious cursing of God and enduring him forever. One would say that even the prophets and redeemers had rather consoled the fears than confirmed the hopes of man. There is nowhere recorded a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God. All health and success does me good, however far off and withdrawn it may appear, all disease and failure helps to make me sad and does me evil, however much sympathy it may have with me or I with it. If, then, we would indeed restore mankind by truly Indian, botanic, magnetic, or natural means, let us first be as simple and well as Nature ourselves, dispel the clouds which hang over our own brows, and take up a little life into our pores. Do not stay to be an overseer of the poor, but endeavor to become one of the worthies of the world.

I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi¹⁰⁷ of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying, Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit, what mystery is there in this? He replied, Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered, to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing, and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents — Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory, for the Dylah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree, but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress "

WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

(CHAPTER II)

At a certain season of our life¹⁰⁸ we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind, even put a higher price on it, —took every thing but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far

from it Well, there I might live, I said, and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life, saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, woodlot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage, and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with, but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough, or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow With respect to landscapes,—

“I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute ”

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only Why, the owner does

not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were, its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field, its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me, the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant, the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have, but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on, like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it, for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale, (I have always cultivated a garden,) was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad, and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "De Re Rusticâ"¹⁰⁹ is my "Cultivator," says, and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage, "When you think of getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily, nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up¹¹⁰ my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows,¹¹¹ the poem of creation is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret, but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time.¹¹² With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go out doors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The *Harivansa*¹¹³ says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds, not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond,¹¹⁴ about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground, but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time, and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that thus on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample

room for all the roving families of men "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara,¹¹⁵ when his herds required new and larger pastures

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him Such was that part of creation where I had squatted,—

"There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by "

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks I got up early and bathed in the pond, that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect. "Renew thyself completely each day, do it again, and again, and forever again " I can understand that Morning brings back the heroic ages I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when

I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem, itself an *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings.¹¹⁶ There was something cosmical about it, a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning,¹¹⁷ which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us, and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from, and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas¹¹⁸ say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor, but only one in a

million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life To be awake is to be alive I have never yet met a man who was quite awake How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful, but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear, nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world, or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."¹¹⁹

Still we live meanly, like ants, though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men, like pygmies we fight with

cranes,¹²⁰ it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand, instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one, instead of a hundred dishes, five, and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land, and the only cure for it as for them is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast.¹²¹ Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not, but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season?¹²² But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad, it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that

underlie the railroad² Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them They are sound sleepers, I assure you And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over, so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life³ We are determined to be starved before we are hungry Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell,¹²³ there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely, yes, even if it were the parish church itself Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels Some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose, and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast "Pray tell me any thing new that has happened to a man any where on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes

gougéd out this morning on the Wachito River, never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office I think that there are very few important communications made through it To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote thus some years ago—that were worth the postage The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper ¹²⁴ If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another One is enough If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth or twelve years beforehand with sufficient accuracy As for Spain,¹²⁵ for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or run of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers. and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649, and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a

merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted ¹²⁶

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: 'What is your master doing?' The messenger answered with respect: 'My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them.' The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: 'What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!'" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggletail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice,—*"Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow!"*

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence,—that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit every where, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up

to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions, whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in concerning then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation, let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible

rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through church and state, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake, and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities, if we are alive, let us go about our business.¹²⁷

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it, but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper, fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver, it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures

use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts, so by the divining rod and thun rising vapors I judge, and here I will begin to mine

THE VILLAGE

(CHAPTER VIII)

After hoeing, or perhaps reading and writing, in the forenoon, I usually bathed again in the pond, swimming across one of its coves for a stunt, and washed the dust of labor from my person, or smoothed out the last wrinkle which study had made, and for the afternoon was absolutely free Every day or two I strolled to the village to hear some of the gossip which is incessantly going on there, circulating either from mouth to mouth, or from newspaper to newspaper, and which, taken in homœopathic doses, was really as refreshing in its way as the rustle of leaves and the peeping of frogs As I walked in the woods to see the birds and squirrels, so I walked in the village to see the men and boys, instead of the wind among the pines I heard the carts rattle In one direction from my house there was a colony of muskrats in the river meadows, under the grove of elms and buttonwoods in the other horizon was a village of busy men, as curious to me as if they had been prairie dogs, each sitting at the mouth of its burrow, or running over to a neighbor's to gossip I went there frequently to observe their habits The village appeared to me a great news room, and on one side, to support it, as once at Redding & Company's on State Street, they kept nuts and raisins, or salt and meal and other groceries Some have such a vast appetite for the former commodity, that is, the news, and such sound digestive organs, that they can sit forever in public avenues without stirring, and let it simmer and whisper through them like the Etesian winds, or as if inhaling ether, it only producing numbness and insensibility to pain,—otherwise it would often be painful to hear,—without affecting the consciousness I hardly ever failed, when I rambled

through the village, to see a row of such worthies, either sitting on a ladder sunning themselves, with their bodies inclined forward and their eyes glancing along the line this way and that, from time to time, with a voluptuous expression, or else leaning against a barn with their hands in their pockets, like caryatides, as if to prop it up. They, being commonly out of doors, heard whatever was in the wind. These are the coarsest mills, in which all gossip is first rudely digested or cracked up before it is emptied into finer and more delicate hoppers within doors. I observed that the vitals of the village were the grocery, the bar-room, the post-office, and the bank, and, as a necessary part of the machinery, they kept a bell, a big gun, and a fire-engine, at convenient places, and the houses were so arranged as to make the most of mankind, in lanes and fronting one another, so that every traveller had to run the gantlet, and every man, woman, and child might get a lick at him. Of course, those who were stationed nearest to the head of the line, where they could most see and be seen, and have the first blow at him, paid the highest prices for their places, and the few straggling inhabitants in the outskirts, where long gaps in the line began to occur, and the traveller could get over walls or turn aside into cow paths, and so escape, paid a very slight ground or window tax. Signs were hung out on all sides to allure him, some to catch him by the appetite, as the tavern and victualling cellar, some by the fancy, as the dry goods store and the jeweller's, and others by the hair or the feet or the skirts, as the barber, the shoemaker, or the tailor. Besides, there was a still more terrible standing invitation to call at every one of these houses, and company expected about these times. For the most part I escaped wonderfully from these dangers, either by proceeding at once boldly and without deliberation to the goal, as is recommended to those who run the gantlet, or by keeping my thoughts on high things, like Orpheus, who, "loudly singing the praises of the gods to his lyre, drowned the voices of the Sirens, and kept out of danger." Sometimes I bolted suddenly, and nobody could tell my whereabouts, for I did not stand much about gracefulness, and never hesitated at a gap in a fence. I was even accustomed

to make an irruption into some houses, where I was well entertained, and after learning the kernels and very last sieve-ful of news, what had subsided, the prospects of war and peace, and whether the world was likely to hold together much longer, I was let out through the rear avenues, and so escaped to the woods again

It was very pleasant, when I staid late in town, to launch myself into the night, especially if it was dark and tempestuous, and set sail from some bright village parlor or lecture room, with a bag of rye or Indian meal upon my shoulder, for my snug harbor in the woods, having made all tight without and withdrawn under hatches with a merry crew of thoughts, leaving only my outer man at the helm, or even tying up the helm when it was plain sailing. I had many a genial thought by the cabin fire "as I sailed." I was never cast away nor distressed in any weather, though I encountered some severe storms. It is darker in the woods, even in common nights, than most suppose. I frequently had to look up at the opening between the trees above the path in order to learn my route, and, where there was no cart-path, to feel with my feet the faint track which I had worn, or steer by the known relation of particular trees which I felt with my hands, passing between two pines for instance, not more than eighteen inches apart, in the midst of the woods, invariably in the darkest night. Sometimes, after coming home thus late in a dark and muggy night, when my feet felt the path which my eyes could not see, dreaming and absent-minded all the way, until I was aroused by having to raise my hand to lift the latch, I have not been able to recall a single step of my walk, and I have thought that perhaps my body would find its way home if its master should forsake it, as the hand finds its way to the mouth without assistance. Several times, when a visitor chanced to stay into evening, and it proved a dark night, I was obliged to conduct him to the cart-path in the rear of the house, and then point out to him the direction he was to pursue, and in keeping which he was to be guided rather by his feet than his eyes. One very dark night I directed thus on their way two young men who had

been fishing in the pond. They lived about a mile off through the woods, and were quite used to the route. A day or two after one of them told me that they wandered about the greater part of the night, close by their own premises, and did not get home till toward morning, by which time, as there had been several heavy showers in the mean while, and the leaves were very wet, they were drenched to their skins. I have heard of many going astray even in the village streets, when the darkness was so thick that you could cut it with a knife, as the saying is. Some who live in the outskirts, having come to town a-shopping in their wagons, have been obliged to put up for the night, and gentlemen and ladies making a call have gone half a mile out of their way, feeling the sidewalk only with their feet, and not knowing when they turned. It is a surprising and memorable, as well as valuable experience, to be lost in the woods any time. Often in a snow storm, even by day, one will come upon a well-known road and yet find it impossible to tell which way leads to the village. Though he knows that he has travelled it a thousand times, he cannot recognize a feature in it, but it is as strange to him as if it were a road in Siberia. By night, of course, the perplexity is infinitely greater. In our most trivial walks, we are constantly, though unconsciously, steering like pilots by certain well-known beacons and headlands, and if we go beyond our usual course we still carry in our minds the bearing of some neighboring cape, and not till we are completely lost, or turned round,—for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost,—do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of Nature. Every man has to learn the points of compass again as often as he awakes, whether from sleep or any abstraction. Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.

One afternoon, near the end of the first summer, when I went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler's, I was seized and put into jail, because, as I have elsewhere related,¹²⁸ I did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of, the state which buys and

sells men, women and children, like cattle at the door of its senate-house I had gone down to the woods for other purposes But, wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, and, if they can, constrain him to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society It is true, I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok" against society, but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party However, I was released the next day, obtained my mended shoe, and returned to the woods in season to get my dinner of huckleberries on Fair-Haven Hill I was never molested by any person but those who represented the state I had no lock nor bolt but for the desk which held my papers, not even a nail to put over my latch or windows I never fastened my door night or day, though I was to be absent several days, not even when the next fall I spent a fortnight in the woods of Maine And yet my house was more respected than if it had been surrounded by a file of soldiers The tired rambler could rest and warm himself by my fire, the literary amuse himself with the few books on my table, or the curious, by opening my closet door, see what was left of my dinner, and what prospect I had of a supper Yet, though many people of every class came this way to the pond, I suffered no serious inconvenience from these sources, and I never missed any thing but one small book, a volume of Homer, which perhaps was improperly gilded, and thus I trust a soldier of our camp has found by this time I am convinced, that if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown These take place only in communities where some have got more than is sufficient while others have not enough The Pope's Homers would soon get properly distributed —

"Nec bella fuerunt,
Fagus astabat dum scyphus ante dapes "

"Nor wars did men molest,
When only beechen bowls were in request "

"You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ

punishments³ Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous The virtues of a superior man are like the wind, the virtues of a common man are like the grass, the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends ”

[A DEDICATED SPIRIT]

(*From* CHAPTER X)

As I was leaving¹²⁹ the Irishman's roof after the rain, bending my steps again to the pond, my haste to catch pickerel, wading in retired meadows, in sloughs and bog-holes, in forlorn and savage places, appeared for an instant trivial to me who had been sent to school and college, but as I ran down the hill toward the reddening west, with the rainbow over my shoulder, and some faint tinkling sounds borne to my ear through the cleansed air, from I know not what quarter, my Good Genius seemed to say,—Go fish and hunt far and wide, day by day,—farther and wider,—and rest thee by many brooks and hearth-sides without misgiving Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures Let the noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee every where at home There are no larger fields than these, no worthier games than may here be played Grow wild according to thy nature, like these sedges and brakes, which will never become English hay Let the thunder rumble, what if it threaten ruin to farmers' crops³ that is not its errand to thee Take shelter under the cloud, while they flee to carts and sheds Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport¹³⁰ Enjoy the land, but own it not Through want of enterprise and faith men are where they are, buying and selling, and spending their lives like serfs

O Baker Farm¹

HIGHER LAWS

(CHAPTER XI)

As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw, not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. Once or twice, however, while I lived at the pond, I found myself ranging the woods, like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me. The wildest scenes had become unaccountably familiar. I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward a primitive rank and savage one,¹³¹ and I reverence them both. I love the wild not less than the good. The wildness and adventure that are in fishing still recommended it to me. I like sometimes to take rank hold on life and spend my day more as the animals do. Perhaps I have owed to this employment and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature. They early introduce us to and detain us in scenery with which otherwise, at that age, we should have little acquaintance. Fishermen, hunters, woodchoppers, and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, in a peculiar sense a part of Nature themselves, are often in a more favorable mood for observing her, in the intervals of their pursuits, than philosophers or poets even, who approach her with expectation. She is not afraid to exhibit herself to them. The traveller on the prairie is naturally a hunter, on the head waters of the Missouri and Columbia a trapper, and at the Falls of St. Mary a fisherman. He who is only a traveller learns things at second-hand and by the halves, and is poor authority. We are most interested when science reports what those men already know practically or instinctively, for that alone is a true *humanity*, or account of human experience.

They mistake who assert that the Yankee has few amusements, because he has not so many public holidays, and men and boys do not play so many games as they do in England, for here the more primitive but solitary amusements of hunting, fishing and the like have not yet given place to the former. Almost every New England boy among my contemporaries shouldered a fowling piece between the ages of ten and fourteen, and his hunting and fishing grounds were not limited like the preserves of an English nobleman, but were more boundless even than those of a savage. No wonder, then, that he did not oftener stay to play on the common. But already a change is taking place, owing, not to an increased humanity, but to an increased scarcity of game, for perhaps the hunter is the greatest friend of the animals hunted, not excepting the Humane Society.

Moreover, when at the pond, I wished sometimes to add fish to my fare for variety. I have actually fished from the same kind of necessity that the first fishers did. Whatever humanity I might conjure up against it was all factitious, and concerned my philosophy more than my feelings. I speak of fishing only now, for I had long felt differently about fowling, and sold my gun before I went to the woods.¹³² Not that I am less humane than others, but I did not perceive that my feelings were much affected. I did not pity the fishes nor the worms. This was habit. As for fowling, during the last years that I carried a gun my excuse was that I was studying ornithology, and sought only new or rare birds. But I confess that I am now inclined to think that there is a finer way of studying ornithology than this. It requires so much closer attention to the habits of the birds, that, if for that reason only, I have been willing to omit the gun. Yet notwithstanding the objection on the score of humanity, I am compelled to doubt if equally valuable sports are ever substituted for these, and when some of my friends have asked me anxiously about their boys, whether they should let them hunt, I have answered, yes,—remembering that it was one of the best parts of my education,—*make* them hunters, though sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at last, so

that they shall not find game large enough for them in this or any vegetable wilderness,—hunters as well as fishers of men. Thus far I am of the opinion of Chaucer's nun,¹³³ who

“yave not of the text a pulled hen
That saith that hunters ben not holy men ”

There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race, when the hunters are the “best men,” as the Algonquins called them. We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun, he is no more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected. This was my answer with respect to those youths who were bent on this pursuit, trusting that they would soon outgrow it. No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature, which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you, mothers, that my sympathies do not always make the usual *philanthropic* distinctions.

Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest, and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects, as a poet or naturalist it may be, and leaves the gun and fish-pole behind. The mass of men are still and always young in this respect. In some countries a hunting parson is no uncommon sight. Such a one might make a good shepherd's dog, but is far from being the Good Shepherd. I have been surprised to consider that the only obvious employment, except wood-chopping, ice-cutting, or the like business, which ever to my knowledge detained at Walden Pond for a whole half day any of my fellow-citizens, whether fathers or children of the town, with just one exception, was fishing. Commonly they did not think that they were lucky, or well paid for their time, unless they got a long string of fish, though they had the opportunity of seeing the pond all the while. They might go there a thousand times before the sediment of fishing would sink to the bottom and leave their purpose pure, but no doubt such a clarifying process would be

going on all the while. The governor and his council faintly remember the pond, for they went a-fishing there when they were boys, but now they are too old and dignified to go a-fishing, and so they know it no more forever. Yet even they expect to go to heaven at last. If the legislature regards it, it is chiefly to regulate the number of hooks to be used there, but they know nothing about the hook of hooks with which to angle for the pond itself, impaling the legislature for a bait. Thus, even in civilized communities, the embryo man passes through the hunter stage of development.

I have found repeatedly, of late years, that I cannot fish without falling a little in self-respect. I have tried it again and again. I have skill at it, and, like many of my fellows, a certain instinct for it, which revives from time to time, but always when I have done I feel that it would have been better if I had not fished. I think that I do not mistake. It is a faint intimation, yet so are the first streaks of morning. There is unquestionably this instinct in me which belongs to the lower orders of creation, yet with every year I am less a fisherman, though without more humanity or even wisdom, at present I am no fisherman at all. But I see that if I were to live in a wilderness I should again be tempted to become a fisher and hunter in earnest. Beside, there is something essentially unclean about this diet and all flesh, and I began to see where housework commences, and whence the endeavor, which costs so much, to wear a tidy and respectable appearance each day, to keep the house sweet and free from all ill odors and sights. Having been my own butcher and scullion and cook, as well as the gentleman for whom the dishes were served up, I can speak from an unusually complete experience. The practical objection to animal food in my case was its uncleanness, and, besides, when I had caught and cleaned and cooked and eaten my fish, they seemed not to have fed me essentially. It was insignificant and unnecessary, and cost more than it came to. A little bread or a few potatoes would have done as well, with less trouble and filth. Like many of my contemporaries, I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea, or coffee, &c., not so much because of any ill effects which

I had traced to them, as because they were not agreeable to my imagination. The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of experience, but is an instinct. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects, and though I never did so, I went far enough to please my imagination. I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, and from much food of any kind. It is a significant fact, stated by entomologists, I find it in Kirby and Spence, that "some insects in their perfect state, though furnished with organs of feeding, make no use of them," and they lay it down as "a general rule, that almost all insects in this state eat much less than in that of larvæ. The voracious caterpillar when transformed into a butterfly,"

. "and the gluttonous maggot when become a fly," content themselves with a drop or two of honey or some other sweet liquid. The abdomen under the wings of the butterfly still represents the larva. This is the tid-bit which tempts his insectivorous fate. The gross feeder is a man in the larva state, and there are whole nations in that condition, nations without fancy or imagination, whose vast abdomens betray them.

It is hard to provide and cook so simple and clean a diet as will not offend the imagination, but this, I think, is to be fed when we feed the body, they should both sit down at the same table. Yet perhaps this may be done. The fruits eaten temperately need not make us ashamed of our appetites, nor interrupt the worthiest pursuits. But put an extra condiment into your dish, and it will poison you. It is not worth the while to live by rich cookery. Most men would feel shame if caught preparing with their own hands precisely such a dinner, whether of animal or vegetable food, as is every day prepared for them by others. Yet till this is otherwise we are not civilized, and, if gentlemen and ladies, are not true men and women. This certainly suggests what change is to be made. It may be vain to ask why the imagination will not be reconciled to flesh and fat. I am satisfied that it is not. Is it not a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? True, he can and does live, in a great measure, by prey-

ing on other animals, but this is a miserable way,—as any one who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn,—and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet. Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other when they came in contact with the more civilized.

If one listens to the faintest but constant suggestions of his genius, which are certainly true, he sees not to what extremes, or even insanity, it may lead him, and yet that way, as he grows more resolute and faithful, his road lies. The faintest assured objection which one healthy man feels will at length prevail over the arguments and customs of mankind. No man ever followed his genius till it misled him. Though the result were bodily weakness, yet perhaps no one can say that the consequences were to be regretted, for these were a life in conformity to higher principles. If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal,—that is your success. All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself. The greatest gains and values are farthest from being appreciated. We easily come to doubt if they exist. We soon forget them. They are the highest reality. Perhaps the facts most astounding and most real are never communicated by man to man. The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched.

Yet, for my part, I was never unusually squeamish, I could sometimes eat a fried rat with a good relish, if it were necessary. I am glad to have drunk water so long, for the same reason that I prefer the natural sky to an opium-eater's heaven. I would fain keep sober always, and there are infinite degrees of drunkenness. I believe that water is the only drink for a wise man, wine

is not so noble a liquor, and think of dashing the hopes of a morning with a cup of warm coffee, or of an evening with a dish of tea! Ah, how low I fall when I am tempted by them! Even music may be intoxicating. Such apparently slight causes destroyed Greece and Rome, and will destroy England and America. Of all ebriosity, who does not prefer to be intoxicated by the air he breathes? I have found it to be the most serious objection to coarse labors long continued, that they compelled me to eat and drink coarsely also. But to tell the truth, I find myself at present somewhat less particular in these respects. I carry less religion to the table, ask no blessing, not because I am wiser than I was, but, I am obliged to confess, because, however much it is to be regretted, with years I have grown more coarse and indifferent. Perhaps these questions are entertained only in youth, as most believe of poetry. My practice is "nowhere," my opinion is here. Nevertheless I am far from regarding myself as one of those privileged ones to whom the Ved refers when it says, that "he who has true faith in the Omnipresent Supreme Being may eat all that exists," that is, is not bound to inquire what is his food, or who prepares it, and even in their case it is to be observed, as a Hindoo commentator has remarked, that the Vedant limits this privilege to "the time of distress."

Who has not sometimes derived an inexpressible satisfaction from his food in which appetite had no share? I have been thrilled to think that I owed a mental perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired through the palate, that some berries which I had eaten on a hill-side had fed my genius. "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thseng-tseu, "one looks, and one does not see, one listens, and one does not hear, one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton, he who does not cannot be otherwise. A puritan may go to his brown-bread crust with as gross an appetite as ever an alderman to his turtle. Not that food which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with which it is eaten. It is neither the quality nor the quantity,

but the devotion to sensual savor, when that which is eaten is not a viand to sustain our animal, or inspire our spiritual life, but food for the worms that possess us. If the hunter has a taste for mud-turtles, muskrats, and other such savage tid-bits, the fine lady indulges a taste for jelly made of a calf's foot, or for sardines from over the sea, and they are even. He goes to the mill-pond, she to her preserve-pot. The wonder is how they, how you and I, can live this slimy beastly life, eating and drinking.

Our whole life is startlingly moral. There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails.¹³⁴ In the music of the harp which trembles round the world it is the insisting on this which thrills us. The harp is the travelling patterer for the Universe's Insurance Company, recommending its laws, and our little goodness is all the assessment that we pay. Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, but are forever on the side of the most sensitive. Listen to every zephyr for some reproof, for it is surely there, and he is unfortunate who does not hear it. We cannot touch a string or move a stop but the charming moral transfixes us. Many an irksome noise, go a long way off, is heard as music, a proud sweet satire on the meanness of our lives.

We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled, like the worms which, even in life and health, occupy our bodies. Possibly we may withdraw from it, but never change its nature. I fear that it may enjoy a certain health of its own, that we may be well, yet not pure. The other day I picked up the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusks, which suggested that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual. This creature succeeded by other means than temperance and purity. "That in which men differ from brute beasts," says Mencius, "is a thing very inconsiderable, the common herd lose it very soon, superior men preserve it carefully." Who knows what sort of life would result if we had attained to purity? If

I knew so wise a man as could teach me purity I would go to seek him forthwith "A command over our passions, and over the external senses of the body, and good acts, are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God" Yet the spirit can for a time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what in form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion ^{13a} The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us Chastity is the flowering of man, and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open By turns our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established Perhaps there is none but has cause for shame on account of the inferior and brutish nature to which he is allied I fear that we are such gods or demigods only as fauns and satyrs, the divine allied to beasts, the creatures of appetite, and that, to some extent, our very life is our disgrace—

"How happy's he who hath due place assigned
To his beasts and disafforested his mind!
Can use his horse, goat, wolf, and ev'ry beast,
And is not ass himself to all the rest!
Else man not only is the herd of swine,
But he's those devils too which did incline
Them to a headlong rage, and made them worse "

All sensuality is one, though it takes many forms, all purity is one It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually They are but one appetite, and we only need to see a person do any one of these things to know how great a sensualist he is The impure can neither stand nor sit with purity When the reptile is attacked at one mouth of his burrow, he shows himself at another If you would be chaste, you must be temperate What is chastity? How shall a man

know if he is chaste² He shall not know it We have heard of this virtue, but we know not what it is We speak conformably to the rumor which we have heard From exertion come wisdom and purity, from sloth ignorance and sensuality In the student sensuality is a sluggish habit of mind An unclean person is universally a slothful one, one who sits by a stove, whom the sun shines on prostrate, who reposes without being fatigued If you would avoid uncleanness, and all the sins, work earnestly, though it be at cleaning a stable Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome What avails that you are Christian, if you are not purer than the heathen, if you deny yourself no more, if you are not more religious³ I know of many systems of religion esteemed heathenish whose precepts fill the reader with shame, and provoke him to new endeavors, though it be to the performance of rites merely

I hesitate to say these things, but it is not because of the subject,—I care not how obscene my *words* are,—but because I cannot speak of them without betraying my impurity We discourse freely without shame of one form of sensuality, and are silent about another We are so degraded that we cannot speak simply of the necessary functions of human nature In earlier ages, in some countries, every function was reverently spoken of and regulated by law Nothing was too trivial for the Hindoo lawgiver, however offensive it may be to modern taste He teaches how to eat, drink, cohabit, void excrement and urine, and the like, elevating what is mean, and does not falsely excuse himself by calling these things trifles

Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he get off by hammering marble instead We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them

John Farmer sat at his door one September evening, after a hard day's work, his mind still running on his labor more or less Having bathed, he sat down to recreate his intellectual man It was a rather cool evening, and some of his neighbors

were apprehending a frost. He had not attended to the train of his thoughts long when he heard some one playing on a flute, and that sound harmonized with his mood. Still he thought of his work, but the burden of his thought was, that though this kept running in his head, and he found himself planning and contriving it against his will, yet it concerned him very little. It was no more than the scurf of his skin, which was constantly shuffled off. But the notes of the flute came home to his ears out of a different sphere from that he worked in, and suggested work for certain faculties which slumbered in him. They gently did away with the street, and the village, and the state in which he lived. A voice said to him,—Why do you stay here and live in this mean moiling life when a glorious existence is possible for you? Those same stars twinkle over other fields than these.—But how to come out of this condition and actually migrate thither? All that he could think of was to practise some new austerity, to let his mind descend into his body and redeem it, and treat himself with ever increasing respect.

[THE BATTLE OF THE ANTS]

(*From* CHAPTER XII)

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whinnying at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch-pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded

spot, under a spreading white-pine, there was yet a clean firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in mid-summer, when the pond was warmest. Thither too the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath, but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle-doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white-pines over my head, or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging, internecine war, the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise

that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noon-day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board, while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was Conquer or die. In the mean while there came along a single red ant on the hill-side of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle, probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs, whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar,—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red,—he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants, then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore-leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members, and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism

displayed For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick,—“Fire! for God's sake fire!”—and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer There was not one hireling there I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea, and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore-leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce, and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them, which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, I do not know, but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war, but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door

Kirby¹³⁶ and Spence tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber¹³⁷ is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them "Æneas Sylvius,"¹³⁸ say they, "after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree," adds that "'This action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth,¹³⁹ in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity.' A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus,¹⁴⁰ in which the small ones, being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden."¹⁴¹ The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive-Slave Bill.

WINTER VISITORS

(From CHAPTER XIV)

Sometimes, notwithstanding the snow, when I returned from my walk at evening I crossed the deep tracks of a woodchopper leading from my door, and found his pile of whittlings on the hearth, and my house filled with the odor of his pipe. Or on a Sunday afternoon, if I chanced to be at home, I heard the cronching of the snow made by the step of a long-headed farmer,¹⁴² who from far through the woods sought my house, to have a social "crack," one of the few of his vocation who are "men on their farms," who donned a frock instead of a professor's gown, and is as ready to extract the moral out of church or state as to haul a load of manure from his barn-yard. We talked of rude and simple times, when men sat about large fires in cold bracing weather, with clear heads, and when other dessert failed, we tried our teeth on many a nut which wise squirrels have long since abandoned, for those which have the thickest shells are commonly empty.

The one who came from farthest to my lodge, through deepest snows and most dismal tempests, was a poet¹⁴³ A farmer, a hunter, a soldier, a reporter, even a philosopher, may be daunted, but nothing can deter a poet, for he is actuated by pure love Who can predict his comings and goings? His business calls him out at all hours, even when doctors sleep We made that small house ring with boisterous mirth and resound with the murmur of much sober talk, making amends then to Walden vale for the long silences Broadway was still and deserted in comparison At suitable intervals there were regular salutes of laughter, which might have been referred indifferently to the last uttered or the forth-coming jest We made many a "bran new" theory of life over a thin dish of gruel, which combined the advantages of conviviality with the clear-headedness which philosophy requires

I should not forget that during my last winter at the pond there was another welcome visitor, who at one time came through the village, through snow and rain and darkness, till he saw my lamp through the trees, and shared with me some long winter evenings One of the last of the philosophers,¹⁴⁴—Connecticut gave him to the world,—he peddled first her wares, afterwards, as he declares, his brains These he peddles still, prompting God and disgracing man, bearing for fruit his brain only, like the nut its kernel I think that he must be the man of the most faith of any alive His words and attitude always suppose a better state of things than other men are acquainted with, and he will be the last man to be disappointed as the ages revolve. He has no venture in the present But though comparatively disregarded now, when his day comes, laws unsuspected by most will take effect, and masters of families and rulers will come to him for advice —

"How blind that cannot see serenity!"

A true friend of man, almost the only friend of human progress An Old Mortality, say rather an Immortality, with unwearied patience and faith making plain the image engraven in men's bodies, the God of whom they are but defaced and leaning

monuments With his hospitable intellect he embraces children, beggars, insane, and scholars, and entertains the thought of all, adding to it commonly some breadth and elegance I think that he should keep a caravansary on the world's highway, where philosophers of all nations might put up, and on his sign should be printed, "Entertainment for man, but not for his beast Enter ye that have leisure and a quiet mind, who earnestly seek the right road " He is perhaps the sanest man and has the fewest crotchets of any I chance to know, the same yesterday and to-morrow Of yore we had sauntered and talked, and effectually put the world behind us, for he was pledged to no institution in it, freeborn, *ingenius* Whichever way we turned, it seemed that the heavens and the earth had met together, since he enhanced the beauty of the landscape A blue-robed man, whose fittest roof is the overarching sky which reflects his serenity I do not see how he can ever die, Nature cannot spare him

Having each some shingles of thought well dried, we sat and whittled them, trying our knives, and admiring the clear yellowish grain of the pumpkin pine We waded so gently and reverently, or we pulled together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought were not scared from the stream, nor feared any angler on the bank, but came and went grandly, like the clouds which float through the western sky, and the mother-o'-pearl flocks which sometimes form and dissolve there There we worked, revising mythology, rounding a fable here and there, and building castles in the air for which earth offered no worthy foundation Great Looker! Great Expecter! to converse with whom was a New England Night's Entertainment Ah! such discourse we had, hermit and philosopher, and the old settler I have spoken of,—we three,—it expanded and racked my little house, I should not dare to say how many pounds' weight there was above the atmospheric pressure on every circular inch, it opened its seams so that they had to be calked with much dullness thereafter to stop the consequent leak,—but I had enough of that kind of oakum already picked

There was one other with whom I had "solid seasons," long to be remembered, at his house in the village, and who looked

in upon me from time to time, but I had no more for society there

There too, as every where, I sometimes expected the Visitor who never comes The Vishnu Purana says, "The householder is to remain at eventide in his courtyard as long as it takes to milk a cow, or longer if he pleases, to await the arrival of a guest " I often performed this duty of hospitality, waited long enough to milk a whole herd of cows, but did not see the man approaching from the town

SPRING

(*From* CHAPTER XVII)

When the ground was partially bare of snow, and a few warm days had dried its surface somewhat, it was pleasant to compare the first tender signs of the infant year just peeping forth with the stately beauty of the withered vegetation which had withstood the winter,—life-everlasting, golden-rods, pin-weeds, and graceful wild grasses, more obvious and interesting frequently than in summer even, as if their beauty was not ripe till then, even cotton-grass, cat-tails, mulleins, johnswort, hardhack, meadow-sweet, and other strong stemmed plants, those unexhausted granaries which entertain the earliest birds,—decent weeds, at least, which widowed Nature wears I am particularly attracted by the arching and sheaf-like top of the wool-grass, it brings back the summer to our winter memories, and is among the forms which art loves to copy, and which, in the vegetable kingdom, have the same relation to types already in the mind of man that astronomy has It is an antique style older than Greek or Egyptian Many of the phenomena of Winter are suggestive of an inexpressible tenderness and fragile delicacy We are accustomed to hear this king described as a rude and boisterous tyrant, but with the gentleness of a lover he adorns the tresses of Summer

At the approach of spring the red-squirrels got under my house, two at a time, directly under my feet as I sat reading or

writing, and kept up the queerest chuckling and churring and vocal pirouetting and gurgling sounds that ever were heard, and when I stamped they only churred the louder, as if past all fear and respect in their mad pranks, defying humanity to stop them. No you don't—chickaree—chickaree. They were wholly deaf to my arguments, or failed to perceive their force, and fell into a strain of invective that was irresistible.

The first sparrow of spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever! The faint silvery warblings heard over the partially bare and moist fields from the blue-bird, the song-sparrow, and the red-wing, as if the last flakes of winter tinkled as they fell! What at such a time are histories, chronologies, traditions, and all written revelations? The brooks sing carols and glees to the spring. The marsh-hawk sailing low over the meadow is already seeking the first slimy life that awakes. The sinking sound of melting snow is heard in all dells, and the ice dissolves apace in the ponds. The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire,—“et primum oritur herba umbribus primonibus evocata,”—as if the earth sent forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun, not yellow but green is the color of its flame,—the symbol of perpetual youth, the grass-blade, like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer, checked indeed by the frost, but anon pushing on again, lifting its spear of last year's hay with the fresh life below. It grows as steadily as the rill oozes out of the ground. It is almost identical with that, for in the growing days of June, when the rills are dry, the grass blades are their channels, and from year to year the herds drink at this perennial green stream, and the mower draws from it betimes their winter supply. So our human life but dies down to its root, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity.

Walden is melting apace. There is a canal two rods wide along the northerly and westerly sides, and wider still at the east end. A great field of ice has cracked off from the main body. I hear a song-sparrow singing from the bushes on the shore,—*olul, olul, olul,—chip, chip, chip, che char,—che wiss, wiss, wiss*. He too is helping to crack it. How handsome the great sweeping

curves in the edge of the ice, answering somewhat to those of the shore, but more regular! It is unusually hard, owing to the recent severe but transient cold, and all watered or waved like a palace floor. But the wind slides eastward over its opaque surface in vain, till it reaches the living surface beyond. It is glorious to behold this ribbon of water sparkling in the sun, the bare face of the pond full of glee and youth, as if it spoke the joy of the fishes within it, and of the sands on its shore,—a silvery sheen as from the scales of a *leuciscus*, as it were all one active fish. Such is the contrast between winter and spring. Walden was dead and is alive again.¹⁴⁵ But this spring it broke up more steadily, as I have said.

The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. It is seemingly instantaneous at last. Suddenly an influx of light filled my house, though the evening was at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold gray ice there lay the transparent pond already calm and full of hope as in a summer evening, reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead, as if it had intelligence with some remote horizon. I heard a robin in the distance, the first I had heard for many a thousand years, methought, whose note I shall not forget for many a thousand more,—the same sweet and powerful song as of yore. O the evening robin, at the end of a New England summer day! If I could ever find the twig he sits upon! I mean *he*, I mean *the twig*. This at least is not the *Turdus migratorius*. The pitch-pines and shrub-oaks about my house, which had so long drooped, suddenly resumed their several characters, looked brighter, greener, and more erect and alive, as if effectually cleansed and restored by the rain. I knew that it would not rain any more. You may tell by looking at any twig of the forest, ay, at your very wood-pile, whether its winter is past or not. As it grew darker, I was startled by the *honking* of geese flying low over the woods, like weary travellers getting

in late from southern lakes, and indulging at last in unrestrained complaint and mutual consolation. Standing at my door, I could hear the rush of their wings, when, driving toward my house, they suddenly spied my light, and with hushed clamor wheeled and settled in the pond. So I came in, and shut the door, and passed my first spring night in the woods.

* * *

A single gentle rain makes the grass many shades greener. So our prospects brighten on the influx of better thoughts. We should be blessed if we lived in the present always, and took advantage of every accident that betell us, like the grass which confesses the influence of the slightest dew that falls on it, and did not spend our time in atoning for the neglect of past opportunities, which we call doing our duty. We loiter in winter while it is already spring. In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven. Such a day is a truce to vice. While such a sun holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return.¹⁴⁶ Through our own recovered innocence we discern the innocence of our neighbors. You may have known your neighbor yesterday for a thief, a drunkard, or a sensualist, and merely pined or despised him, and despaired of the world, but the sun shines bright and warm this first spring morning, recreating the world, and you meet him at some serene work, and see how his exhausted and debauched veins expand with still joy and bless the new day, feel the spring influence with the innocence of infancy, and all his faults are forgotten. There is not only an atmosphere of good will about him, but even a savor of holiness groping for expression, blindly and ineffectually perhaps, like a new-born instinct, and for a short hour the south hill-side echoes to no vulgar jest. You see some innocent fair shoots preparing to burst from his gnarled rind and try another year's life, tender and fresh as the youngest plant. Even he has entered into the joy of his Lord. Why the jailer does not leave open his prison doors,—why the judge does not dismiss his case,—why the preacher does not dismiss his

congregation! It is because they do not obey the hint which God gives them, nor accept the pardon which he freely offers to all

CONCLUSION

(CHAPTER XVIII)

To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery. Thank Heaven, here is not all the world. The buck-eye does not grow in New England, and the mocking-bird is rarely heard here. The wild-goose is more of a cosmopolite than we, he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Ohio, and plumes himself for the night in a southern bayou. Even the bison, to some extent, keeps pace with the seasons, cropping the pastures of the Colorado only till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone. Yet we think that if rail-fences are pulled down, and stone-walls piled up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided. If you are chosen town-clerk, forsooth, you cannot go to Tierra del Fuego this summer, but you may go to the land of infernal fire nevertheless. The universe is wider than our views of it.¹⁴⁷

Yet we should oftener look over the taffarel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum. The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing, and the doctors prescribe for diseases of the skin merely. One hastens to Southern Africa to chase the giraffe, but surely that is not the game he would be after. How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and wood-cocks also may afford rare sport, but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self —

“Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
Expert in home-cosmography.”

What does Africa,—what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin¹⁴⁸ the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park,¹⁴⁹ the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans, explore your own higher latitudes,—with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary, and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self*-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition,¹⁵⁰ with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone —

“Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos
Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ ” ¹⁵¹

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians
I have more of God, they more of the road

It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do thus even till you can do better, and

you may perhaps find some "Symmes' Hole"¹⁵² by which to get at the inside at last England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea, but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalized in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone,¹⁵³ even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and Explore thyself Herein are demanded the eye and the nerve Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down too

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery "to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society" He declared that "a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a foot-pad,"—"that honor and religion have never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve" This was manly, as the world goes, and yet it was idle, if not desperate A saner man would have found himself often enough "in formal opposition" to what are deemed "the most sacred laws of society," through obedience to yet more sacred laws, and so have tested his resolution without going out of his way It is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government, if he should chance to meet with such¹⁵⁴

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves I had not lived there a week before

my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side, and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct ¹⁵⁵ It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men, and so with the paths which the mind travels How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains I do not wish to go below now

I learned this, at least, by my experiment, that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary, new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him,¹⁵⁶ or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost, that is where they should be Now put the foundations under them

It is a ridiculous demand which England and America make, that you shall speak so that they can understand you Neither men nor toad-stools grow so As if that were important, and there were not enough to understand you without them As if Nature could support but one order of understandings, could not sustain birds as well as quadrupeds, flying as well as creeping things, and *hush* and *who*, which Bright can understand, were the best English As if there were safety in stupidity alone I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extravagant* enough, may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced *Extravagance!* it depends on how you are yarded The migrating buffalo, which seeks new

pastures in another latitude, is not extravagant like the cow which kicks over the pail, leaps the cow-yard fence, and runs after her calf, in milking time. I desire to speak somewhere *without* bounds, like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments, for I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression. Who that has heard a strain of music¹⁵⁷ feared then lest he should speak extravagantly any more forever? In view of the future or possible, we should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side, as our shadows reveal an insensible perspiration toward the sun. The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual statement. Their truth is instantly *translated*, its literal monument alone remains. The words which express our faith and piety are not definite, yet they are significant and fragrant like frankincense to superior natures.

Why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring. Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit. Some would find fault with the morning-red, if they ever got up early enough. "They pretend," as I hear, "that the verses of Kabir¹⁵⁸ have four different senses, illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas," but in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation. While England endeavors to cure the potato-rot, will not any endeavor to cure the brain-rot, which prevails so much more widely and fatally?

I do not suppose that I have attained to obscurity, but I should be proud if no more fatal fault were found with my pages on this score than was found with the Walden ice. Southern customers¹⁵⁹ objected to its blue color, which is the evidence of its purity, as if it were muddy, and preferred the Cambridge ice, which is white, but tastes of weeds. The purity men love is like the mists which envelop the earth, and not like the azure ether beyond.

Some are dinning¹⁶⁰ in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can? Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made.

Why should we be¹⁶¹ in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material, and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the

point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star, and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions, in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure, how could the result be other than wonderful?

No face which we can give to a matter will stead us so well at last as the truth. This alone wears well. For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. Through an infirmity of our natures, we suppose a case, and put ourselves into it, and hence are in two cases at the same time, and it is doubly difficult to get out. In sane moments we regard only the facts, the case that is. Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had any thing to say. "Tell the tailors," said he, "to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch." His companion's prayer is forgotten.

However mean your life is, meet it and live it, do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor-house. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the alms-house as brightly as from the rich man's abode, the

snow melts before its door as early in the spring I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace. The town's poor¹⁶² seem to me often to live the most independent lives of any. May be they are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Most think that they are above being supported by the town, but it oftener happens that they are not above supporting themselves by dishonest means, which should be more disreputable. Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble yourself much to get new things, whether clothes or friends. Turn the old, return to them. Things do not change, we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts. God will see that you do not want society. If I were confined to a corner of a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts about me. The philosopher said "From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder, from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thought." Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject yourself to many influences to be played on, it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights. The shadows of poverty and meanness gather around us, "and lo! creation widens to our view."¹⁶³ We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Croesus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences, you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is sweetest. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses ever on a lower level by magnanimity on a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.

I live in the angle of a leaden wall, into whose composition was poured a little alloy of bell metal. Often, in the repose of my mid-day, there reaches my ears a confused *tintinnabulum*

from without. It is the noise of my contemporaries. My neighbors tell me of their adventures with famous gentlemen and ladies, what notabilities they met at the dinner-table, but I am no more interested in such things than in the contents of the *Daily Times*. The interest and the conversation are about costume and manners chiefly, but a goose is a goose still, dress it as you will. They tell me of California and Texas, of England and the Indies, of the Hon. Mr. — of Georgia or of Massachusetts, all transient and fleeting phenomena, till I am ready to leap from their court-yard like the Mameluke bey. I delight to come to my bearings,—not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may,—not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by. What are men celebrating? They are all on a committee of arrangements, and hourly expect a speech from somebody. God is only the president of the day, and Webster is his orator. I love to weigh, to settle, to gravitate toward that which most strongly and rightfully attracts me,—not hang by the beam of the scale and try to weigh less,—not suppose a case, but take the case that is, to travel the only path I can, and that on which no power can resist me. It affords me no satisfaction to commence to spring an arch before I have got a solid foundation. Let us not play at kittlybenders.¹⁶⁴ There is a solid bottom every where. We read that the traveller asked the boy if the swamp before him had a hard bottom. The boy replied that it had. But presently the traveller's horse sank in up to the girths, and he observed to the boy, "I thought you said that this bog had a hard bottom." "So it has," answered the latter, "but you have not got half way to it yet." So it is with the bogs and quicksands of society, but he is an old boy that knows it. Only what is thought, said or done at a certain rare coincidence is good. I would not be one of those who will foolishly drive a nail into mere lath and plastering, such a deed would keep me awake nights. Give me a hammer, and let me feel for the furrowing. Do not depend on the putty. Drive a nail home and clinch it so faithfully that you can wake up in

the night and think of your work with satisfaction,—a work at which you would not be ashamed to invoke the Muse. So will help you God, and so only. Every nail driven should be as another rivet in the machine of the universe, you carrying on the work.

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not, and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage, but I thought of an older, a newer and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage, which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and “entertainment” pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes, and in the afternoon go forth to practise Christian meekness and charity with goodness aforethought! Consider the China pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind. This generation reclines a little to congratulate itself on being the last of an illustrious line, and in Boston and London and Paris and Rome, thinking of its long descent, it speaks of its progress in art and science and literature with satisfaction. There are the Records of the Philosophical Societies, and the public Eulogies of *Great Men*! It is the good Adam contemplating his own virtue. “Yes, we have done great deeds, and sung divine songs, which shall never die,”—that is, as long as *we* can remember them. The learned societies and great men of Assyria,—where are they? What youthful philosophers and experimentalists we are! There is not one of my readers who has yet lived a whole human life. These may

be but the spring months in the life of the race. If we have had the seven-years' itch, we have not seen the seventeen-year locust yet in Concord. We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface. Truly, we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits! As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, and endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight, and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts, and hide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I am reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me the human insect.

There is an incessant influx of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dulness. I need only suggest what kind of sermons are still listened to in the most enlightened countries. There are such words as joy and sorrow, but they are only the burden of a psalm, sung with a nasal twang, while we believe in the ordinary and mean. We think that we can change our clothes only. It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power. We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip, if he should ever harbor it in his mind. Who knows what sort of seventeen-year locust will next come out of the ground? The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.

The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands, even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf

of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts,—from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it, which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb,—heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board,—may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this, but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

From JOURNAL

(November 16, 1850—March 28, 1859)

[WILDNESS]

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us ¹⁶⁵ Dullness is only another name for tameness It is the untamed, uncivilized, free, and wild thinking in Hamlet, in the Iliad, and in all the scriptures and mythologies that delights us,—not learned in the schools, not refined and polished by art A truly good book is something as wildly natural and primitive, mysterious and marvellous, ambrosial and fertile, as a fungus or a lichen Suppose the muskrat or beaver were to turn his views to literature, what fresh views of nature would he present! The fault of our books and other deeds is that they are too humane I want something speaking in some measure to the condition of muskrats and skunk-cabbage as well as of men,—not merely to a pining and complaining coterie of philanthropists

(VIII, 97, Nov 16, 1850)

[THE ECSTATIC MOMENT]

Our most glorious experiences are a kind of regret Our regret is so sublime that we may mistake it for triumph It is the painful, plaintively sad surprise of our Genius remembering our past lives and contemplating what is possible It is remarkable that men commonly never refer to, never hint at, any crowning experiences when the common laws of their being were unsettled and the divine and eternal laws prevailed in them Their lives are not revolutionary, they never recognize any other than the local and temporal authorities It is a regret so divine and inspiring, so genuine, based on so true and distinct a contrast, that it surpasses our proudest boasts and the fairest expectations

My most sacred and memorable life is commonly on awaking in the morning I frequently awake with an atmosphere about me as if my unremembered dreams had been divine, as if my spirit had journeyed to its native place, and, in the act of reentering its native body, had diffused an elysian fragrance around

The Genius says "Ah! That is what you were! That is what you may yet be!" It is glorious for us to be able to regret even such an existence

A sane and growing man revolutionizes every day What institutions of man can survive a morning experience? A single night's sleep, if we have indeed slumbered and forgotten anything and grown in our sleep, puts them behind us like the river Lethe It is no unusual thing for him to see the kingdoms of this world pass away ¹⁶⁶ (VIII, 213-214, May 24, 1851)

[CHILDHOOD ECSTASY]

Methinks my present experience is nothing, my past experience is all in all I think that no experience which I have to-day comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood And not only this is true, but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence "For life is a forgetting," etc Formerly, methought, nature developed as I developed, and grew up with me My life was ecstasy In youth, before I lost any of my senses, I can remember that I was all alive, and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction, both its weariness and its refreshment were sweet to me This earth was the most glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains To have such sweet impressions made on us, such ecstasies begotten of the breezes! I can remember how I was astonished I said to myself,—I said to others,—"There comes into my mind such an indescribable, infinite, all-absorbing, divine, heavenly pleasure, a sense of elevation and expansion, and [I] have had nought to do with it. I perceive that I am dealt with by superior powers. This is a pleasure, a joy,

an existence which I have not procured myself I speak as a witness on the stand, and tell what I have perceived " The morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from society of men I wondered if a mortal had ever known what I knew I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience, but, strange to say, I found none Indeed, I was slow to discover that other men had had this experience, for it had been possible to read books and to associate with men on other grounds The maker of me was improving me When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved For years I marched as to a music in comparison with which the military music of the streets is noise and discord I was daily intoxicated, and yet no man could call me intemperate With all your science can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?¹⁶⁷

(VIII, 306-307, July 16, 1851)

[RECOLLECTION IN TRANQUILLITY]

Our ecstatic states, which appear to yield so little fruit, have this value at least though in the seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for expression, yet, in calmer seasons, when our talent is active, the memory of those rarer moods comes to color our picture and is the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our brush Thus no life or experience goes unreported at last, but if it be not solid gold it is gold-leaf, which gilds the furniture of the mind It is an experience of infinite beauty on which we unfailingly draw, which enables us to exaggerate ever truly Our moments of inspiration are not lost though we have no particular poem to show for them, for those experiences have left an indelible impression, and we are ever and anon reminded of them Their truth subsides, and in cooler moments we can use them as paint to gild and adorn our prose When I despair to sing them, I will remember that they will furnish me with paint with which to adorn and preserve the works of talent one day They are like a pot of pure ether They lend the writer when

the moment comes a certain superfluity of wealth, making his expression to overrun and float itself. It is the difference between our river, now parched and dried up, exposing its unsightly and weedy bottom, and the same when, in the spring, it covers all the meads with a chain of placid lakes, reflecting the forests and the skies (VIII, 468-469, Sept 7, 1851)

[“DEAR NATIVE REGIONS”]

The glorious sandy banks far and near, caving and sliding,—far sandy slopes, the forts of the land,—where you see the naked flesh of New England, her garment being blown aside like that of the priests (of the Levites?) when they ascend to the altar. Seen through this November sky, these sands are dear to me, worth all the gold of California, suggesting Pactolus, while the Saxonville factory-bell sounds o’er the woods. That sound perchance it is that whets my vision. The shore suggests the seashore, and two objects at a distance near the shore look like seals on a sand-bar. Dear to me to lie in, this sand, fit to preserve the bones of a race for thousands of years to come. And this is my home, my native soil, and I am a New-Englander. Of thee, O earth, are my bone and sinew made, to thee, O sun, am I brother. It must be the largest lake in Middlesex. To this dust my body will gladly return as to its origin. Here have I my habitat. I am of thee ¹⁶⁸ (IX, 95, Nov 7, 1851)

[THE WOODCHUCK]

As I turned round the corner of Hubbard’s Grove, saw a woodchuck, the first of the season, in the middle of the field, six or seven rods from the fence which bounds the wood, and twenty rods distant. I ran along the fence and cut him off, or rather overtook him, though he started at the same time. When I was only a rod and a half off, he stopped, and I did the same, then he ran again, and I ran up within three feet of him, when he stopped again, the fence being between us. I squatted down and surveyed him at my leisure. His eyes were dull black and

rather inobvious, with a faint chestnut (?) iris, with but little expression and that more of resignation than of anger. The general aspect was a coarse grayish brown, a sort of grisel (?). A lighter brown next the skin, then black or very dark brown and tipped with whitish rather loosely. The head between a squirrel and a bear, flat on the top and dark brown, and darker still or black on the tip of the nose. The whiskers black, two inches long. The ears very small and roundish, set far back and nearly buried in the fur. Black feet, with long and slender claws for digging. It appeared to tremble, or perchance shivered with cold. When I moved, it gritted its teeth quite loud, sometimes striking the under jaw against the other chatteringly, sometimes grinding one jaw on the other, yet as if more from instinct than anger. Whichever way I turned, that way it headed. I took a twig a foot long and touched its snout, at which it started forward and bit the stick, lessening the distance between us to two feet, and still it held all the ground it gained. I played with it tenderly a while with the stick, trying to open its gritting jaws. Ever its long incisors, two above and two below, were presented. But I thought it would go to sleep if I stayed long enough. It did not sit upright as sometimes, but *standing* on its fore feet with its head down, *i.e.* half sitting, half standing. We sat looking at one another about half an hour, till we began to feel mesmeric influences. When I was tired, I moved away, wishing to see him run, but I could not start him. He would not stir as long as I was looking at him or could see him. I walked round him, he turned as fast and fronted me still. I sat down by his side within a foot. I talked to him *quasi* forest lingo, baby-talk, at any rate in a conciliatory tone, and thought that I had some influence on him. He gritted his teeth less. I chewed checkerberry leaves and presented them to his nose at last without a grit, though I saw that by so much gritting of the teeth he had worn them rapidly and they were covered with a fine white powder, which, if you measured it thus, would have made his anger terrible. He did not mind any noise I might make. With a little stick I lifted one of his paws to examine it, and

held it up at pleasure I turned him over to see what color he was beneath (darker or more purely brown), though he turned himself back again sooner than I could have wished His tail was also all brown, though not very dark, rat-tail like, with loose hairs standing out on all sides like a caterpillar brush He had a rather mild look I spoke kindly to him I reached checkerberry leaves to his mouth I stretched my hands over him, though he turned up his head and still gritted a little I laid my hand on him, but immediately took it off again, instinct not being wholly overcome If I had had a few fresh bean leaves, thus in advance of the season, I am sure I should have tamed him completely It was a frizzly tail His is a humble, terrestrial color like the partridge's, well concealed where dead wiry grass rises above darker brown or chestnut dead leaves,—a modest color If I had had some food, I should have ended with stroking him at my leisure Could easily have wrapped him in my handkerchief He was not fat nor particularly lean I finally had to leave him without seeing him move from the place A large, clumsy, burrowing squirrel *Arctomys*, bear-mouse I respect him as one of the natives He lies there, by his color and habits so naturalized amid the dry leaves, the withered grass, and the bushes A sound nap, too, he has enjoyed in his native fields, the past winter I think I might learn some wisdom of him His ancestors have lived here longer than mine He is more thoroughly acclimated and naturalized than I Bean leaves the red man raised for him, but he can do without them (IX, 420-423, April 16, 1852)

[THOREAU THE TRANSCENDENTALIST]

The secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science¹⁶⁹ requests me, as he probably has thousands of others, by a printed circular letter from Washington the other day, to fill the blank against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science I was specially interested in, using the term science in the most comprehensive sense possible Now, though I could state to a select few that

department of human inquiry which engages me, and should be rejoiced at an opportunity to do so, I felt that it would be to make myself the laughing-stock of the scientific community to describe or attempt to describe to them that branch of science which specially interests me, inasmuch as they do not believe in a science which deals with the higher law. So I was obliged to speak to their condition and describe to them that poor part of me which alone they can understand. The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. Now I think of it, I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations.
(XI, 4, March 5, 1853)

[EMERSON]

P M—Talked, or tried to talk, with R W E. Lost my time—nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind—told me what I knew—and I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him.
(XI, 188, May 24, 1853)

[FAULTS OF STYLE]

My faults are —

Paradoxes,—saying just the opposite,—a style which may be imitated

Ingenious

Playing with words,—getting the laugh,—not always simple, strong, and broad

Using current phrases and maxims, when I should speak for myself

Not always earnest.

"In short," "in fact," "alas!" etc

Want of conciseness

(XIII, 7-8, Sept 2, 1854)

[CONCORD vs PARIS]

When it was proposed to me to go abroad, rub off some rust, and *better my condition* in a worldly sense, I fear lest my life will lose some of its homeliness. If these fields and streams and woods, the phenomena of nature here, and the simple occupations of the inhabitants should cease to interest and inspire me, no culture or wealth would atone for the loss. I fear the dissipation that travelling, going into society, even the best, the enjoyment of intellectual luxuries, imply. If Paris is much in your mind, if it is more and more to you, Concord is less and less, and yet it would be a wretched bargain to accept the proudest Paris in exchange for my native village. At best, Paris could only be a school in which to learn to live here, a stepping-stone to Concord, a school in which to fit for this university. I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, every-day phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive, my daily walk, the conversation of my neighbors, may inspire me, and I may dream of no heaven but that which lies about me. A man may acquire a taste for wine or brandy, and so lose his love for water, but should we not pity him?¹⁷⁰

(XIV, 204, March 11, 1856)

[A BROKEN FRIENDSHIP]

And now another friendship is ended.¹⁷¹ I do not know what has made my friend doubt me, but I know that in love there is no mistake, and that every estrangement is well founded. But my destiny is not narrowed, but if possible the broader for it. The heavens withdraw and arch themselves higher. I am sensible not only of a moral, but even a grand physical pain, such as gods may feel, about my head and breast, a certain ache and fullness. This rending of a tie, it is not my work nor thine. It is no accident that we mind, it is only the awards of fate that are affecting. I know of no æons, or periods, no life and death, but these meetings and separations. My life is like a stream

that is suddenly dammed and has no outlet, but it rises the higher up the hills that shut it in, and will become a deep and silent lake. Certainly there is no event comparable for grandeur with the eternal separation—if we may conceive it so—from a being that we have known. I become in a degree sensible of the meaning of finite and infinite. What a grand significance the word “never” acquires! With one with whom we have walked on high ground we cannot deal on any lower ground ever after. We have tried for so many years to put each other to this immortal use, and have failed. Undoubtedly our good genius have mutually found the material unsuitable. We have hitherto paid each other the highest possible compliment, we have recognized each other constantly as divine, have afforded each other that opportunity to live that no other wealth or kindness can afford. And now, for some reason inappreciable by us, it has become necessary for us to withhold this mutual aid. Perchance there is none beside who knows us for a god, and none whom we know for such. Each man and woman is a veritable god or goddess, but to the mass of their fellows disguised. There is only one in each case who sees through the disguise. That one who does not stand so near to any man as to see the divinity in him is truly alone. I am perfectly sad at parting from you. I could better have the earth taken away from under my feet, than the thought of you from my mind. One while I think that some great injury has been done, with which you are implicated, again that you are no party to it. I fear that there may be incessant tragedies, that one may treat his fellow as a god but receive somewhat less regard from him. I now almost for the first time *fear* this. Yet I believe that in the long run there is no such inequality.

(XV, 249-250, Feb 8, 1857)

[THE TWILIGHT YEARS]

As the afternoons grow shorter, and the early evening drives us home to complete our chores, we are reminded of the shortness of life, and become more pensive, at least in this twilight

of the year We are prompted to make haste and finish our work before the night comes I leaned over a rail in the twilight on the Walden road, waiting for the evening mail to be distributed, when such thoughts visited me I seemed to recognize the November evening as a familiar thing come round again, and yet I could hardly tell whether I had ever known it or only divined it The November twilights just begun! It appeared like a part of a panorama at which I sat spectator, a part with which I was perfectly familiar just coming into view, and I foresaw how it would look and roll along, and prepared to be pleased Just such a piece of art merely, though infinitely sweet and grand, did it appear to me, and just as little were any active duties required of me We are independent on all that we see The hangman whom I have *seen* cannot hang me The earth which I have *seen* cannot bury me Such doubleness and distance does sight prove Only the rich and such as are troubled with ennui are implicated in the maze of phenomena You cannot see anything until you are clear of it The long railroad causeway through the meadows west of me, the still twilight in which hardly a cricket was heard, the dark bank of clouds in the horizon long after sunset, the villagers crowding to the post-office, and the hastening home to supper by candle-light, had I not seen all this before! What new sweet was I to extract from it? Truly they mean that we shall learn our lesson well Nature gets thumbed like an old spelling-book The alms-house and Frederick were still as last November I was no nearer, methinks, nor further off from my friends Yet I sat the bench with perfect contentment, unwilling to exchange the familiar vision that was to be unrolled for any treasure or heaven that could be imagined Sure to keep just so far apart in our orbits still, in obedience to the laws of attraction and repulsion, affording each other only steady but indispensable starlight It was as if I was promised the greatest novelty the world has ever seen or shall see, though the utmost possible novelty would be the difference between me and myself a year ago Thus alone encouraged me, and was my fuel for the approaching winter That we may behold the panorama with this

slight improvement or change, this is what we sustain life for with so much effort from year to year

And yet there is no more tempting novelty than this new November. No going to Europe or another world is to be named with it. Give me the old familiar walk, post-office and all, with this ever new self, with this infinite expectation and faith, which does not know when it is beaten. We'll go nutting once more. We'll pluck the nut of the world, and crack it in the winter evenings. Theatres and all other sightseeing are puppet-shows in comparison. I will take another walk to the Cliff, another row on the river, another skate on the meadow, be out in the first snow, and associate with the winter birds. Here I am at home. In the bare and bleached crust of the earth I recognize my friend (XVII, 273-275, Nov. 1, 1858)

[THE INDIAN ARROWHEAD]

Time will soon destroy the works of famous painters and sculptors, but the Indian arrowhead will baffle his efforts and Eternity will have to come to his aid. They are not fossil bones, but, as it were, fossil thoughts, forever reminding me of the mind that shaped them. I would fain know that I am treading in the tracks of human game,—that I am on the trail of mind,—and these little reminders never fail to set me right. When I see these signs I know that the subtle spirits that made them are not far off, into whatever form transmuted. What if you do plow and hoe amid them, and swear that not one stone shall be left upon another? They are only the less like to break in that case. When you turn up one layer you bury another so much the more securely. They are at peace with rust. This arrow-headed character promises to outlast all others. The larger pestles and axes may, perchance, grow scarce and be broken, but the arrowhead shall, perhaps, never cease to wing its way through the ages to eternity. It was originally winged for but a short flight, but it still, to my mind's eye, wings its way through the ages, bearing a message from the hand that shot it. Myriads of arrow-points lie sleeping in the skin of the revolving earth, while

meteors revolve in space The footprint, the mind-print of the oldest men When some Vandal chieftain has razed to the earth the British Museum, and, perchance, the winged bulls from Ninevah shall have lost most if not all of their features, the arrowheads which the museum contains will, perhaps, find themselves at home again in familiar dust, and resume their shining in new springs upon the bared surface of the earth then, to be picked up for the thousandth time by the shepherd or savage that may be wandering there, and once more suggest their story to him

(XVIII, 91-92, March 28, 1859)

THOMAS CARLYLE AND HIS WORKS

When we remember how these volumes came over to us, with their encouragement and provocation from mouth to mouth,¹⁷² and what commotion they created in many private breasts, we wonder that the country did not ring, from shore to shore, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with its greeting, and the Boons and Crockets of the West make haste to hail him, whose wide humanity embraces them too. Of all that the packets have brought over to us, has there been any richer cargo than this? What else has been English news for so long a season? What else, of late years, has been England to us—to us who read books, we mean? Unless we remembered it as the scene where the age of Wordsworth was spending itself, and a few younger muses were trying their wings, and from time to time, as the residence of Landon, Carlyle alone, since the death of Coleridge, has kept the promise of England. It is the best apology for all the bustle and the sin of commerce, that it has made us acquainted with the thoughts of this man. Commerce would not concern us much if it were not for such results as this. New England owes him a debt which she will be slow to recognize. His earlier essays reached us at a time when Coleridge's were the only recent words which had made any notable impression so far, and they found a field unoccupied by him, before yet any words of moment had been uttered in our midst. He had this advantage, too, in a teacher, that he stood near to his pupils, and he has no doubt afforded reasonable encouragement and sympathy to many an independent but solitary thinker. Through him, as usher, we have been latterly, in a great measure, made acquainted with what philosophy and criticism the nineteenth century had to offer—admitted, so to speak, to the privileges of the century, and what he may yet have to say, is still expected here with more interest than any thing else from that quarter.

* * *

It is not in man to determine what his style shall be. He might as well determine what his thoughts shall be. We would not have had him write always as in the chapter on Burns, and the Life of Schiller, and elsewhere. No, his thoughts were ever irregular and impetuous. Perhaps as he grows older and writes more he acquires a truer expression, it is in some respects milder, freer, struggling up to a level with its fountain-head. We think it is the richest prose style we know of.

Who cares what a man's style is, so it is intelligible—as intelligible as his thought. Literally and really, the style is no more than the *stylus*, the pen he writes with—and it is not worth scraping and polishing, and gilding, unless it will write his thoughts the better for it. It is something for use, and not to look at. The question for us is not whether Pope had a fine style, wrote with a peacock's feather, but whether he uttered useful thoughts. Translate a book a dozen times from one language to another, and what becomes of its style? Most books would be worn out and disappear in this ordeal. The pen which wrote it is soon destroyed, but the poem survives. We believe that Carlyle has, after all, more readers, and is better known to-day for this very originality of style, and that posterity will have reason to thank him for emancipating the language, in some measure, from the fetters which a merely conservative, aimless, and pedantic literary class had imposed upon it, and setting an example of greater freedom and naturalness. No man's thoughts are new, but the style of their expression is the never failing novelty which cheers and refreshes men. If we were to answer the question, whether the mass of men, as we know them, talk as the standard authors and reviewers write, or rather as this man writes, we should say that he alone begins to write their language at all, and that the former is, for the most part, the mere effigies of a language, not the best method of concealing one's thoughts even, but frequently a method of doing without thoughts at all.

In his graphic description of Richter's style, Carlyle describes his own pretty nearly, and no doubt he first got his own tongue loosened at that fountain, and was inspired by it to equal

freedom and originality "The language," as he says of Richter, "groans with indescribable metaphors and allusions to all things, human and divine, flowing onward, not like a river, but like an inundation, circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling, now this way, now that," but in Carlyle, "the proper current" never "sinks out of sight amid the boundless uproar" Again "His very language is Titanian—deep, strong, tumultuous, shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes"

In short, if it is desirable that a man be eloquent, that he talk much, and address himself to his own age mainly, then this is not a bad style of doing it But if it is desired rather that he pioneer into unexplored regions of thought, and speak to silent centuries to come, then, indeed, we could wish that he had cultivated the style of Goethe more, that of Richter less, not that Goethe's is the kind of utterance most to be prized by mankind, but it will serve for a model of the best that can be successfully cultivated

But for style, and fine writing, and Augustan ages—that is but a poor style, and vulgar writing, and a degenerate age, which allows us to remember these things This man has something to communicate Carlyle's are not, in the common sense, works of art in their origin and aim, and yet, perhaps, no living English writer evinces an equal literary talent They are such works of art only as the plough, and corn-mill, and steam-engine—not as pictures and statues Others speak with greater emphasis to scholars, as such, but none so earnestly and effectually to all who can read Others give their advice, he gives his sympathy also It is no small praise that he does not take upon himself the airs, has none of the whims, none of the pride, the nice vulgarities, the starched, impoverished isolation, and cold glitter of the spoiled children of genius He does not need to husband his pearl, but excels by a greater humanity and sincerity

He is singularly serious and untrivial We are every where impressed by the rugged, unwearied, and rich sincerity of the man We are sure that he never sacrificed one jot of his honest

thought to art or whim, but to utter himself in the most direct and effectual way, that is the endeavor. These are merits which will wear well. When time has worn deeper into the substance of these books, this grain will appear. No such sermons have come to us here out of England, in late years, as those of this preacher, sermons to kings, and sermons to peasants, and sermons to all intermediate classes. It is in vain that John Bull, or any of his cousins, turns a deaf ear, and pretends not to hear them, nature will not soon be weary of repeating them. There are words less obviously true, more for the ages to hear, perhaps, but none so impossible for this age not to hear. What a cutting cimeter was that "past and present," going through heaps of silken stuffs, and glibly through the necks of men, too, without their knowing it, leaving no trace. He has the earnestness of a prophet. In an age of pedantry and dilettantism, he has no grain of these in his composition. There is no where else, surely, in recent readable English, or other books, such direct and effectual teaching, reproving, encouraging, stimulating, earnestly, vehemently, almost like Mahomet, like Luther, not looking behind him to see how his *Opera Omnia* will look, but forward to other work to be done. His writings are a gospel to the young of this generation, they will hear his manly, brotherly speech with responsive joy, and press forward to older or newer gospels.

We should omit a main attraction in these books, if we said nothing of their humor. Of this indispensable pledge of sanity, without some leaven of which the abstruse thinker may justly be suspected of mysticism, fanaticism, or insanity, there is a superabundance in Carlyle. Especially the transcendental philosophy needs the leaven of humor to render it light and digestible. In his later and longer works it is an unfailing accompaniment, reverberating through pages and chapters, long sustained without effort. The very punctuation, the italics, the quotation marks, the blank spaces and dashes, and the capitals, each and all are pressed into its service.

Every man, of course, has his fane, from which even the most

innocent conscious humor is excluded, but in proportion as the writer's position is high above his fellows, the range of his humor is extended. To the thinker, all the institutions of men, as all imperfection, viewed from the point of equanimity, are legitimate subjects of humor. Whatever is not necessary, no matter how sad or personal, or universal a grievance, is, indeed, a jest more or less sublime.¹⁷³

Carlyle's humor is vigorous and Titanic, and has more sense in it than the sober philosophy of many another. It is not to be disposed of by laughter and smiles merely, it gets to be too serious for that—only they may laugh who are not hit by it. For those who love a merry jest, this is a strange kind of fun—rather too practical joking, if they understand it. The pleasant humor which the public loves, is but the innocent pranks of the ballroom, harmless flow of animal spirits, the light plushy pressure of dandy pumps, in comparison. But when an elephant takes to treading on your corns, why then you are lucky if you sit high, or wear cowhide. His humor is always subordinate to a serious purpose, though often the real charm for the reader, is not so much in the essential progress and final upshot of the chapter, as in this indirect side-light illustration of every hue. He sketches first with strong, practical English pencil, the essential features in outline, black on white, more faithfully than Dryasdust would have done, telling us wisely whom and what to mark, to save time, and then with brush of camel's hair, or sometimes with more expeditious swab, he lays on the bright and fast colors of his humor everywhere. One piece of solid work, be it known, we have determined to do, about which let there be no jesting, but all things else under the heavens, to the right and left of that, are for the time fair game. To us this humor is not wearisome, as almost every other is. Rabelais, for instance, is intolerable, one chapter is better than a volume—it may be sport to him, but it is death to us. A mere humorist, indeed, is a most unhappy man, and his readers are most unhappy also.

Humor is not so distinct a quality as, for the purposes of criticism, it is commonly regarded, but allied to every, even the

divinest faculty The familiar and cheerful conversation about every hearth-side, if it be analyzed, will be found to be sweetened by this principle There is not only a never-failing, pleasant, and earnest humor kept up there, embracing the domestic affairs, the dinner, and the scolding, but there is also a constant run upon the neighbors, and upon church and state, and to cherish and maintain this, in a great measure, the fire is kept burning, and the dinner provided There will be neighbors, parties to a very genuine, even romantic friendship, whose whole audible salutation and intercourse, abstaining from the usual cordial expressions, grasping of hands, or affectionate farewells, consists in the mutual play and interchange of a genial and healthy humor, which excepts nothing, not even themselves, in its lawless range The child plays continually, if you will let it, and all its life is a sort of practical humor of a very pure kind, often of so fine and ethereal a nature, that its parents, its uncles and cousins, can in no wise participate in it, but must stand aloof in silent admiration, and reverence even The more quiet the more profound it is Even nature is observed to have her playful moods or aspects, of which man seems sometimes to be the sport

But, after all, we could sometimes dispense with the humor, though unquestionably incorporated in the blood, if it were replaced by this author's gravity We should not apply to himself, without qualification, his remarks on the humor of Richter With more repose in his inmost being, his humor would become more thoroughly genial and placid Humor is apt to imply but a half satisfaction at best In his pleasantest and most genial hour, man smiles but as the globe smiles, and the works of nature The fruits *dry* ripe, and much as we relish some of them, in their green and pulpy state, we lay up for our winter store, not out of these, but the rustling autumnal harvests Though we never weary of this vivacious wit, while we are perusing its work, yet when we remember it from afar, we sometimes feel balked and disappointed, missing the security, the simplicity, and frankness, even the occasional magnanimity of acknowledged dullness and bungling This never-failing success and

brilliant talent become a reproach To the most practical reader the humor is certainly too obvious and constant a quality ¹⁷⁴ When we are to have dealings with a man, we prize the good faith and valor of soberness and gravity There is always a more impressive statement than consists with these victorious comparisons Besides, humor does not wear well It is commonly enough said, that a joke will not bear repeating The deepest humor will not keep Humors do not circulate but stagnate, or circulate partially In the oldest literature, in the Hebrew, the Hindoo, the Persian, the Chinese, it is rarely humor, even the most divine, which still survives, but the most sober and private, painful or joyous thoughts, maxims of duty, to which the life of all men may be referred After time has sifted the literature of a people, there is left only their SCRIPTURE, for that is WRITING, *par excellence* This is as true of the poets, as of the philosophers and moralists by profession, for what subsides in any of these is the moral only, to re-appear as dry land at some remote epoch

We confess that Carlyle's humor is rich, deep, and variegated, in direct communication with the back bone and risible muscles of the globe—and there is nothing like it, but much as we relish this jovial, this rapid and delugeous way of conveying one's views and impressions, when we would not converse but meditate, we pray for a man's diamond edition of his thought, without the colored illuminations in the margin—the fishes and dragons, and unicorns, the red or the blue ink, but its initial letter in distinct skeleton type, and the whole so clipped and condensed down to the very essence of it, that time will have little to do We know not but we shall immigrate soon, and would fain take with us all the treasures of the east, and all kinds of *dry*, portable soups, in small tin canisters, which contain whole herds of English beeves, boiled down, will be acceptable

The difference between this flashing, fitful writing and pure philosophy, is the difference between flame and light. The flame, indeed, yields light, but when we are so near as to observe the flame, we are apt to be incommoded by the heat and smoke But the sun, that old Platonist, is set so far off in the heavens,

that only a genial summer-heat and ineffable day-light can reach us. But many a time, we confess, in wintry weather, we have been glad to forsake the sun-light, and warm us by these Promethean flames.

Carlyle must undoubtedly plead guilty to the charge of mannerism. He not only has his vein, but his peculiar manner of working it. He has a style which can be imitated, and sometimes is an imitator of himself. Every man, though born and bred in the metropolis of the world, will still have some provincialism adhering to him, but in proportion as his aim is simple and earnest, he approaches at once the most ancient and the most modern men.¹⁷⁵ There is no mannerism in the Scriptures. The style of proverbs, and indeed of all *maxims*, whether measured by sentences or by chapters, if they may be said to have any style, is one, and as the expression of one voice, merely an account of the matter by the latest witness. It is one advantage enjoyed by men of science, that they use only formulas which are universal. The common language and the common sense of mankind, it is most uncommon to meet with in the individual. Yet liberty of thought and speech is only liberty to think the universal thought, and speak the universal language of men, instead of being enslaved to a particular mode. Of this universal speech there is very little. It is equable and sure, from a depth within man which is beyond education and prejudice.

Certainly, no critic has anywhere said what is more to the purpose, than this which Carlyle's own writings furnish, which we quote, as well for its intrinsic merit as for its pertinence here. "It is true," says he, thinking of Richter, "the beaten paths of literature lead the safest to the goal, and the talent pleases us most, which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws, Sophocles, Shakspeare, Cervantes, and in Richter's own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true, and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion." And again, in the chapter on Goethe, "We read Goethe for years before we come to see

wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists¹ It seems quite a simple style, [that of his²] remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short, its commonness, and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles " And this, too, translated for us by the same pen from Schiller, which we will apply not merely to the outward form of his works, but to their inner form and substance He is speaking of the artist "Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century, not, however, to delight it by his presence, but, dreadful, like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time, nay, from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature "

But enough of this Our complaint is already out of all proportion to our discontent

Carlyle's works, it is true, have not the stereotyped success which we call classic They are a rich but inexpensive entertainment, at which we are not concerned lest the host has strained or impoverished himself to feed his guests It is not the most lasting word, nor the loftiest wisdom, but rather the word which comes last For his genius it was reserved to give expression to the thoughts which were throbbing in a million breasts. He has plucked the ripest fruit in the public garden, but this fruit already least concerned the tree that bore it, which was rather perfecting the bud at the foot of the leaf stalk. His works are not to be studied, but read with a swift satisfaction Their flavor and gust is like what poets tell of the froth of wine, which can only be tasted once and hastily On a review we can never find the pages we had read. The first impression is the truest and the deepest, and there is no reprint, no *double entendre*, so to speak, for the alert reader Yet they are in some degree true natural products in this respect. All things are but once, and never repeated The first faint blushes of the morn-

ing, gilding the mountain tops, the pale phosphor and saffron-colored clouds do verily transport us to the morning of creation, but what avails it to travel eastward, or look again there an hour hence¹⁷⁶ We should be as far in the day ourselves, mounting toward our meridian These works were designed for such complete success that they serve but for a single occasion It is the luxury of art, when its own instrument is manufactured for each particular and present use The knife which slices the bread of Jove ceases to be a knife when this service is rendered

But he is wilfully and pertinaciously unjust, even scurrilous, impolite, ungentlemanly, calls us "Imbeciles," "Dilettants," "Philistines," implying sometimes what would not sound well expressed If he would adopt the newspaper style, and take back these hard names—but where is the reader who does not derive some benefit from these epithets, applying them to himself¹⁷⁷ Think not that with each repetition of them there is a fresh overflowing of bile, oh no Perhaps none at all after the first time, only a faithfulness, the right name being found, to apply it—"They are the same ones we meant before"—and oft-times with a genuine sympathy and encouragement expressed Indeed, there appears in all his writings a hearty and manly sympathy with all misfortune and wretchedness, and not a weak and sniveling one They who suspect a Mephistopheles, or sneering, satirical devil, under all, have not learned the secret of true humor, which sympathizes with the gods themselves, in view of their grotesque, half-finished creatures.

He is, in fact, the best tempered, and not the least impartial of reviewers He goes out of his way to do justice to profligates and quacks There is somewhat even Christian, in the rarest and most peculiar sense, in his universal brotherliness, his simple, child-like endurance, and earnest, honest endeavor, with sympathy for the like And this fact is not insignificant, that he is almost the only writer of biography, of the lives of men, in modern times¹⁷⁸ So kind and generous a tribute to the genius of Burns cannot be expected again, and is not needed. We honor him for his noble reverence for Luther, and his patient, almost reverent study of Goethe's genius, anxious that no

shadow of his author's meaning escape him for want of trustful attention. There is nowhere else, surely, such determined and generous love of whatever is manly in history. His just appreciation of any, even inferior talent, especially of all sincerity, under whatever guise, and all true men of endeavor, must have impressed every reader. Witness the chapters on Werner, Heyne, even Cagliostro, and others. He is not likely to underrate his man. We are surprised to meet with such a discriminator of kingly qualities in these republican and democratic days, such genuine loyalty all thrown away upon the world.

Carlyle, to adopt his own classification, is himself the hero, as literary man. There is no more notable working-man in England, in Manchester or Birmingham, or the mines round about. We know not how many hours a-day he toils, nor for what wages, exactly, we only know the results for us. We hear through the London fog and smoke the steady systole, diastole, and vibratory hum, from "Somebody's Works" there, the "Print Works," say some, the "Chemicals," say others, where something, at any rate, is manufactured which we remember to have seen in the market.¹⁷⁹ This is the place, then. Literature has come to mean, to the ears of laboring men, something idle, something cunning and pretty merely, because the nine hundred and ninety-nine really write for fame or for amusement. But as the laborer works, and soberly by the sweat of his brow earns bread for his body, so this man *works* anxiously and *sadly*, to get bread of life, and dispense it. We cannot do better than quote his own estimate of labor from Sartor Resartus.

"Two men I honor, and no third. First, the toil-worn craftsman that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand, crooked, coarse, whereim, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. Venerable, too, is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence, for it is the face of a man living manlike. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee. Hardly-entreated brother!

For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed, thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred For in thee, too, lay a god-created form, but it was not to be unfolded, encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of labor, and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom Yet toil on, toil on, *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may, thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread "

"A second man I honor, and still more highly, him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, not daily bread, but the bread of life Is not he, too, in his duty, endeavoring toward inward harmony, revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavors, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavor are one, when we can name him Artist, not earthly craftsman only, but inspired thinker, that with heaven-made implement conquers heaven for us If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have light, have guidance, freedom, immortality? These two in all their degrees, I honor; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth "

"Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united, and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimar in this world know I nothing than a peasant saint, could such now anywhere be met with Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself, thou wilt see the splendor of heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness "

Notwithstanding the very genuine, admirable, and loyal tributes to Burns, Schiller, Goethe, and others, Carlyle is not a critic of poetry In the book of heroes, Shakspeare, the hero, as poet, comes off rather slimly. His sympathy, as we said, is with the men of endeavor; not using the life got, but still bravely getting their life "In fact," as he says of Cromwell, "every where we have to notice the decisive, practical eye of this

man, how he drives toward the practical and practicable, has a genuine insight into what *is* fact." You must have very stout legs to get noticed at all by him. He is thoroughly English in his love of practical men, and dislike for cant, and ardent enthusiastic heads that are not supported by any legs. He would kindly knock them down that they may regain some vigor by touching their mother earth. We have often wondered how he ever found out Burns, and must still refer a good share of his delight in him to neighborhood and early association. The Lycidas and Comus appearing in Blackwood's Magazine, would probably go unread by him, nor lead him to expect a Paradise Lost. The condition of England question is a practical one. The condition of England demands a hero, not a poet. Other things demand a poet, the poet answers other demands. Carlyle in London, with this question pressing on him so urgently, sees no occasion for minstrels and rhapsodists there. Kings may have their bards when there are any kings. Homer would *certainly* go a begging there. He lives in Chelsea,¹⁸⁰ not on the plains of Hindostan, nor on the prairies of the West, where settlers are scarce, and a man must at least go *whistling* to himself.

What he says of poetry is rapidly uttered, and suggestive of a thought, rather than the deliberate development of any. He answers your question, What is poetry? by writing a special poem, as that Norse one, for instance, in the Book of Heroes, altogether wild and original,—answers your question, What is light? by kindling a blaze which dazzles you, and pales sun and moon, and not as a peasant might, by opening a shutter. And, certainly, you would say that this question never could be answered but by the grandest of poems, yet he has not dull breath and stupidity enough, perhaps, to give the most deliberate and universal answer, such as the fates wring from illiterate and unthinking men.¹⁸¹ He answers like Thor, with a stroke of his hammer, whose dint makes a valley in the earth's surface.

Carlyle is not a *seer*, but a brave looker-on and *reviewer*, not the most free and catholic observer of men and events, for they are likely to find him preoccupied, but unexpectedly free and catholic when they fall within the focus of his lens. He does not

live in the present hour, and read men and books as they occur for his theme, but having chosen this, he directs his studies to this end

But if he supplies us with arguments and illustrations against himself, we will remember that we may perhaps be convicted of error from the same source—stalking on these lofty reviewer's stilts so far from the green pasturage around¹⁸² If we look again at his page, we are apt to retract somewhat that we have said. Often a genuine poetic feeling dawns through it, like the texture of the earth seen through the dead grass and leaves in the spring. There is indeed more poetry in this author than criticism on poetry.¹⁸³ He often reminds us of the ancient Scald, inspired by the grimmer features of life, dwelling longer on Dante than on Shakspeare. We have not recently met with a more solid and unquestionable piece of poetic work than that episode of "The Ancient Monk," in *Past and Present*, at once idyllic, narrative, heroic, a beautiful restoration of a past age. There is nothing like it elsewhere that we know of. The History of the French Revolution is a poem, at length got translated into prose, an *Iliad*, indeed, as he himself has it—"The destructive wrath of Sansculotism this is what we speak, having unhappily no voice for singing."

One improvement¹⁸⁴ we could suggest in this last, as indeed in most epics, that he should let in the sun oftener upon his picture. It does not often enough appear, but it is all revolution, the old way of human life turned simply bottom upward, so that when at length we are inadvertently reminded of the "Brest Shipping," a St. Domingo colony, and that anybody thinks of owning plantations, and simply turning up the soil there, and that now at length, after some years of this revolution, there is a falling off in the importation of sugar, we feel a queer surprise. Had they not sweetened their water with Revolution then? It would be well if there were several chapters headed "Work for the Mouth"—Revolution-work inclusive, of course—"Altitude of the Sun," "State of the Crops and Markets," "Meteorological Observations," "Attractive Industry," "Day Labor," &c., just to remind the reader that the French peasantry

did something beside go without breeches, burn châteaux, get ready knotted cords, and embrace and throttle one another by turns. These things are sometimes hinted at, but they deserve a notice more in proportion to their importance. We want not only a background to the picture, but a ground under the feet also. We remark, too, occasionally, an unphilosophical habit, common enough elsewhere, in Alison's *History of Modern Europe*, for instance, of saying, undoubtedly with effect, that if a straw had not fallen this way or that, why then—but, of course, it is as easy in philosophy to make kingdoms rise and fall as straws. The old adage is as true for our purpose, which says that a miss is as good as a mile.¹⁸⁵ Who shall say how near the man came to being killed who was not killed? If an apple had not fallen then we had never heard of Newton and the law of gravitation, as if they could not have contrived to let fall a pear as well.

The poet is blithe and cheery ever, and as well as nature. Carlyle has not the simple Homeric health of Wordsworth, nor the deliberate philosophic turn of Coleridge, nor the scholastic taste of Landor, but, though sick and under restraint, the constitutional vigor of one of his old Norse heroes, struggling in a lurid light, with Lotuns still, striving to throw the old woman, and "she was Time"—striving to lift the big cat—and that was "The Great World-Serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps up the whole created world." The smith, though so brawny and tough, I should not call the healthiest man. There is too much shop-work, too great extremes of heat and cold, and incessant ten-pound-ten and thrashing of the anvil, in his life. But the haymaker's is a true sunny perspiration, produced by the extreme of summer heat only, and conversant with the blast of the zephyr, not of the forge-bellows. We know very well the nature of this man's sadness, but we do not know the nature of his gladness. There sits Bull in the court all the year round, with his hoarse bark and discontented growl—not a cross dog, only a canine habit, verging to madness some think—now separated from the shuddering travelers only by the paling, now heard afar in the horizon, even melodious there, baying the moon o'

nights, *baying the sun by day*, with his mastiff mouth¹⁸⁶ He never goes after the cows, nor stretches in the sun, nor plays with the children Pray give him a longer rope, ye gods, or let him go at large, and never taste raw meat more

The poet will maintain serenity in spite of all disappointments He is expected to preserve an unconcerned and healthy outlook over the world while he lives *Philosophia practica est eruditionis meta*, philosophy practiced is the good of learning, and for that other, *Oratoris est celare artem*, we might read, *Herois est celare pugnam*, the hero will conceal his struggles Poetry is the only life got, the only work done, the only pure product and free labor of man, performed only when he has put all the world under his feet, and conquered the last of his foes

Carlyle speaks of Nature with a certain unconscious pathos for the most part She is to him a receded but ever memorable splendor, casting still a reflected light over all his scenery As we read his books here in New England, where there are potatoes enough, and every man can get his living peacefully and sportively as the birds and bees, and need think no more of that, it seems to us as if by the world he often meant London, at the head of the tide upon the Thames, the sorest place on the face of the earth, the very citadel of conservatism Possibly a South African village might have furnished a more hopeful, and more exacting audience, or in the silence of the wilderness and the desert, he might have addressed himself more entirely to his true audience, posterity¹⁸⁷

In his writings, we should say that he, as conspicuously as any, though with little enough expressed or even conscious sympathy, represents the Reformer class, and all the better for not being the acknowledged leader of any In him the universal plaint is most settled, unappeasable and serious Until a thousand named and nameless grievances are righted, there will be no repose for him in the lap of nature, or the seclusion of science and literature By foreseeing it he hastens the crisis in the affairs of England, and is as good as many years added to her history.

As we said, we have no adequate word from him concerning

poets—Homer, Shakspeare, nor more, we might add, of Saints—Jesus, nor philosophers—Socrates, Plato, nor mystics—Swedenborg¹³⁸ He has no articulate sympathy at least with such as these as yet. Odin, Mahomet, Cromwell, will have justice at his hands, and we would leave him to write the eulogies of all the giants of the will, but the kings of men, whose kingdoms are wholly in the hearts of their subjects, strictly transcendent and moral greatness, what is highest and worthiest in character, he is not inclined to dwell upon or point to To do himself justice, and set some of his readers right, he should give us some transcendent hero at length, to rule his demigods and Titans, develop, perhaps, his reserved and dumb reverence for Christ, not speaking to a London or Church of England audience merely Let *not* "sacred silence meditate that sacred matter" forever, but let us have sacred speech and sacred scripture thereon True reverence is not necessarily dumb, but oftentimes prattling and hilarious as children in the spring¹³⁹

Every man will include in his list of worthies those whom he himself best represents Carlyle, and our countryman Emerson, whose place and influence must ere long obtain a more distinct recognition, are, to a certain extent, the complement of each other The age could not do with one of them, it cannot do with both To make a broad and rude distinction, to suit our present purpose, the former, as critic, deals with the men of action—Mahomet, Luther, Cromwell, the latter with the thinkers—Plato, Shakspeare, Goethe, for though both have written upon Goethe, they do not meet in him The one has more sympathy with the heroes, or practical reformers, the other with the observers, or philosophers Put these worthies together, and you will have a pretty fair representation of mankind, yet with one or more memorable exceptions To say nothing of Christ, who yet awaits a just appreciation from literature, the peacefully practical hero, whom Columbus may represent, is obviously slighted, but above and after all, the Man of the Age, come to be called working-man, it is obvious that none yet speaks to his condition, for the speaker is not yet in his condition There is poetry and prophecy to cheer him,

and advice of the head and heart to the hands, but no very memorable cooperation, it must be confessed, since the Christian era, or rather since Prometheus tried it ¹⁹⁰ It is even a noteworthy fact, that a man addresses effectually, in another only himself still, and what he himself does and is, alone can he prompt the other to do and to become Like speaks to like only, labor to labor, philosophy to philosophy, criticism to criticism, poetry to poetry, &c Literature speaks how much still to the past, how little to the future, how much to the east, how little to the west—

In the East tames are won,
In the West deeds are done

One more merit in Carlyle, let the subject be what it may, is the freedom of prospect he allows, the entire absence of cant and dogma He removes many cart-loads of rubbish, and leaves open a broad highway His writings are all enfenced on the side of the future and the possible He does not place himself across the passage out of his books, so that none may go freely out, but rather by the entrance, inviting all to come in and go through ¹⁹¹ No gins, no net-work, no pickets here, to restrain the free thinking reader In many books called philosophical, we find ourselves running hither and thither, under and through, and sometimes quite unconsciously straddling some imaginary fence-work, which in our clairvoyance we had not noticed, but fortunately, not with such fatal consequences as happen to those birds which fly against a white-washed wall, mistaking it for fluid air As we proceed the wreck of this dogmatic tissue collects about the organs of our perception, like cobwebs about the muzzles of hunting dogs in dewy mornings If we look up with such eyes as these authors furnish, we see no heavens, but a low pent-roof of straw or tiles, as if we stood under a shed, with no sky-light through which to glimpse the blue.

Carlyle, though he does but inadvertently direct our eyes to the open heavens, nevertheless, lets us wander broadly underneath, and shows them to us reflected in innumerable pools and

lakes We have from him, occasionally, some hints of a possible science of astronomy even, and revelation of heavenly arcana, but nothing definite hitherto ¹⁹²

These volumes contain not the highest, but a very practicable wisdom, which startles and provokes, rather than informs us Carlyle does not oblige us to think, we have thought enough for him already, but he compels us to act We accompany him rapidly through an endless gallery of pictures, and glorious reminiscences of experiences unimproved "Have you not had Moses and the prophets? Neither will ye be persuaded if one should rise from the dead" There is no calm philosophy of life here, such as you might put at the end of the Almanac, to hang over the farmer's hearth, how men shall live in these winter, in these summer days No philosophy, properly speaking, of love, or friendship, or religion, or politics, or education, or nature, or spirit, perhaps a nearer approach to a philosophy of kingship, and of the place of the literary man, than of any thing else A rare preacher, with prayer, and psalm, and sermon, and benediction, but no contemplation of man's life from serene oriental ground, nor yet from the stirring occidental No thanksgiving sermon for the holydays, or the Easter vacations, when all men submit to float on the full currents of life When we see with what spirits, though with little heroism enough, wood-choppers, drovers, and apprentices, take and spend life, playing all day long, sunning themselves, shading themselves, eating, drinking, sleeping, we think that the philosophy of their life written would be such a level natural history as the Gardener's Calendar, and the works of the early botanists, inconceivably slow to come to practical conclusions, its premises away off before the first morning light, ere the heather was introduced into the British isles, and no inferences to be drawn during this noon of the day, not till after the remote evening shadows have begun to fall around ¹⁹³

There is no philosophy here for philosophers, only as every man is said to have his philosophy No system but such as is the man himself; and, indeed, he stands compactly enough No

progress beyond the first assertion and challenge, as it were, with trumpet blast. One thing is certain, that we had best be doing something in good earnest, henceforth forever, that's an indispensable philosophy. The before impossible precept, "*know thyself*," he translates into the partially possible one, "*know what thou canst work at*." Sartor Resartus is, perhaps, the sunniest and most philosophical, as it is the most autobiographical of his works, in which he drew most largely on the experience of his youth. But we miss everywhere a calm depth, like a lake, even stagnant, and must submit to rapidity and whirl, as on skates, with all kinds of skillful and antic motions, sculling, sliding, cutting punch-bowls and rings, forward and backward. The talent is very nearly equal to the genius. Sometimes it would be preferable to wade slowly through a Serbonian bog, and feel the juices of the meadow. We should say that he had not speculated far, but faithfully, living up to it.¹⁹⁴ He lays all the stress still on the most elementary and initiatory maxims, introductory to philosophy. It is the experience of the religionist. He pauses at such a quotation as, "It is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin," or, "Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action," or, "Do the duty which lies nearest thee." The chapters entitled, "The Everlasting No," and "The Everlasting Yea," contain what you might call the religious experience of his hero. In the latter, he assigns to him these words, brief, but as significant as any we remember in this author — "One BIBLE I know, of whose plenary inspiration doubt is not so much as possible, nay, with my own eyes I saw the God's-hand writing it. thereof all other Bibles are but leaves." This belongs to "The Everlasting Yea," yet he lingers unaccountably in "The Everlasting No," under the negative pole. "Truth!" he still cries with Teufelsdröckh, "though the heavens crush me for following her no falsehood! though a whole celestial Lubberland were the price of apostasy." Again, "Living without God in the world, of God's light I was not utterly bereft, if my as yet sealed eyes, with their unspeakable longing, could nowhere see Him, nevertheless, in my heart He was present, and His heaven-written

law still stood legible and sacred there " Again, "Ever from that time, [*the era of his Protest,*] the temper of my misery was changed not fear or whining sorrow was it, but indignation and grim, fire-eyed defiance " And in the "Centre of Indifference," as editor, he observes, that "it was no longer a quite hopeless unrest," and then proceeds, not in his best style, "For the fire-baptized soul, long so scathed and thunder-riven, here feels its own freedom, which feeling is its Baphometric Baptism the citadel of its whole kingdom it has thus gained by assault, and will keep inexpugnable, outward from which the remaining dominions, not, indeed, without hard battling, will doubtless by degrees be conquered and pacificated "

Beside some philosophers of larger vision, Carlyle stands like an honest, half-despairing boy, grasping at some details only of their world systems Philosophy, certainly, is some account of truths, the fragments and very insignificant parts of which man will practice in this work-shop, truths infinite and in harmony with infinity, in respect to which the very objects and ends of the so-called practical philosopher, will be mere propositions, like the rest It would be no reproach to a philosopher that he knew the future better than the past, or even than the present It is better worth knowing He will prophecy, tell what is to be, or in other words, what alone is, under appearances, laying little stress on the boiling of the pot, or the Condition of England question He has no more to do with the condition of England than with her national debt, which a vigorous generation would not inherit The philosopher's conception of things will, above all, be truer than other men's, and his philosophy will subordinate all the circumstances of life To live like a philosopher, is to live, not foolishly, like other men, but wisely, and according to universal laws In this, which was the ancient sense, we think there has been no philosopher in modern times ¹⁹⁶ The wisest and most practical men of recent history, to whom this epithet has been hastily applied, have lived comparatively meagre lives, of conformity and tradition, such as their fathers transmitted to them But a man may live in what style he can. Between earth and heaven, there is room for

all kinds. If he take counsel of fear and prudence, he has already failed. One who believed, by his very constitution, some truth which a few words express, would make a revolution never to be forgotten in this world, for it needs but a fraction of truth to found houses and empires on.

However, such distinctions as poet and philosopher, do not much assist our final estimate of a man, we do not lay much stress on them. "A man's a man for a' that." If Carlyle does not take two steps in philosophy, are there any who take three? Philosophy having crept clinging to the rocks, so far, puts out its feelers many ways in vain. It would be hard to surprise him by the relation of any important human experience, but in some nook or corner of his works, you will find that this, too, was sometimes dreamed of in his philosophy.

To sum up our most serious objections, in a few words, we should say that Carlyle indicates a depth,—and we mean not impliedly, but distinctly,—which he neglects to fathom. We want to know more about that which he wants to know as well. If any luminous star, or undissolvable nebula, is visible from his station, which is not visible from ours, the interests of science require that the fact be communicated to us. The universe expects every man to do his duty in his parallel of latitude. We want to hear more of his inmost life, his hymn and prayer, more, his elegy and eulogy, less, that he should speak more from his character, and less from his talent, communicate centrally with his readers, and not by a side, that he should say what he believes, without suspecting that men disbelieve it, out of his never-misunderstood nature. Homer and Shakspeare speak directly and confidently to us.¹⁹⁶ The confidence implied in the unsuspicious tone of the world's worthies, is a great and encouraging fact. Dig up some of the earth you stand on, and show that. If he gave us religiously the meagre results of his experience, his style would be less picturesque and diversified, but more attractive and impressive. His genius can cover all the land with gorgeous palaces, but the reader does not abide in them, but pitches his tent rather in the desert and on the mountain peak.

When we look about for something to quote, as the fairest specimen of the man, we confess that we labor under an unusual difficulty, for his philosophy is so little of the proverbial or sentential kind, and opens so gradually, rising insensibly from the reviewer's level, and developing its thought completely and in detail, that we look in vain for the brilliant passages, for point and antithesis, and must end by quoting his works entire. What in a writer of less breadth would have been the proposition which would have bounded his discourse, his column of victory, his Pillar of Hercules, and *ne plus ultra*, is in Carlyle frequently the same thought unfolded, no Pillar of Hercules, but a considerable prospect, north and south, along the Atlantic coast. There are other pillars of Hercules, like beacons and light-houses, still further in the horizon, toward Atlantis, set up by a few ancient and modern travelers, but, so far as this traveler goes, he clears and colonizes, and all the surplus population of London is bound thither at once. What we would quote is, in fact, his vivacity, and not any particular wisdom or sense, which last is ever synonymous with sentence, [*sententia*,] as in his contemporaries, Coleridge, Landor and Wordsworth.

We have not attempted to discriminate between his works, but have rather regarded them all as one work, as is the man himself. We have not examined so much as remembered them. To do otherwise, would have required a more indifferent, and perhaps even less just review, than the present. The several chapters were thankfully received, as they came out, and now we find it impossible to say which was best, perhaps each was best in its turn.¹⁹⁷ They do not require to be remembered by chapters—that is a merit—but are rather remembered as a well-known strain, reviving from time to time, when it had nearly died away, and always inspiring us to worthier and more persistent endeavors.

In his last work, "The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell," Carlyle has added a chapter to the history of England, has actually written a chapter of her history, and, in comparison with this, there seems to be no other,—this, and the thirty

thousand or three hundred thousand pamphlets in the British Museum, and that is all. This book is a practical comment on Universal History. What if there were a British Museum in Athens and Babylon, and nameless cities! It throws light on the history of the *Iliad* and the labors of Pisistratus. History is, then, an account of memorable events that have sometime transpired, and not an incredible and confused fable, quarters for scholars merely, or a gymnasium for poets and orators. We may say that he has dug up a hero, who was buried alive in his battle-field, hauled him out of his cairn, on which every passer had cast a pamphlet. We had heard of their digging up Arthurs before to be sure they were there, and, to be sure they were there, their bones, seven feet of them, but they had to bury them again. Others have helped to make known Shakspeare, Milton, Herbert, to give a name to such treasures as we all possessed, but, in this instance, not only a lost character has been restored to our imaginations, but palpably a living body, as it were, to our senses, to wear and sustain the former. His Cromwell's restoration, if England will read it faithfully, and addressed to New England too. Every reader will make his own application.

To speak deliberately, we think that in this instance, vague rumor and a vague history have for the first time been subjected to a rigid scrutiny, and the wheat, with at least novel fidelity, sifted from the chaff, so that there remain for result,—First, Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, now for the first time read or readable, and well nigh as complete as the fates will permit, secondly, Deeds, making an imperfect and fragmentary life, which may, with probability, be fathered upon him, thirdly, this wreck of an ancient picture, the present editor has, to the best of his ability, restored, sedulously scraping away the daubings of successive bunglers, and endeavoring to catch the spirit of the artist himself. Not the worst, nor a barely possible, but for once the most favorable construction has been put upon this evidence of the life of a man, and the result is a picture of the ideal Cromwell, the perfection of the painter's art. Possibly this was the actual man. At any rate, this only can contain the actual hero. We confess that when we read these Letters

and Speeches, unquestionably Cromwell's, with open and confident mind, we get glimpses occasionally of a grandeur and heroism, which even this editor has not proclaimed His "Speeches" make us forget modern orators, and might go right into the next edition of the Old Testament, without alteration Cromwell *was* another sort of man than *we* had taken him to be These Letters and Speeches have supplied the lost key to his character Verily another soldier than Bonaparte, rejoicing in the triumph of a psalm, to whom psalms were for Magna Charta and Heralds' Book, and whose victories were "crowning mercies" For stern, antique, and practical religion, a man unparalleled, since the Jewish dispensation, in the line of kings An old Hebrew warrior, indeed, and last right-hand man of the Lord of Hosts, that has blown his ram's horn about Jericho Yet, with a remarkable common sense and unexpected liberality, there was joined in him, too, such a divine madness, though with large and sublime features, as that of those duffers of beans on St George's Hill, whom Carlyle tells of He still listened to ancient and decaying oracles If his actions were not always what Christianity or the truest philosophy teaches, still they never fail to impress us as noble, and however violent, will always be pardoned to the great purpose and sincerity of the man His unquestionable hardness, not to say willfulness, not prevailing by absolute truth and greatness of character, but honestly striving to bend things to his will, is yet grateful to consider in this or any age As John Maidstone said, "He was a strong man in the dark perils of war, in the high places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire, when it had gone out in the others" And as Milton sang, whose least testimony cannot be spared—

"Our chief of men,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude."

None ever spake to Cromwell before, sending a word of cheer across the centuries—not the "hear!" "hear!" of modern parliaments, but the congratulation and sympathy of a brother soul The Letters and Speeches owe not a little to the "Inter-

calations" and "Annotations" of the "latest of the Commentators" The reader will not soon forget how like a happy merchant in the crowd, listening to his favorite speaker, he is all on the alert, and sympathetic, nudging his neighbors from time to time, and throwing in his responsive or interrogatory word All is good, both that which he didn't hear, and that which he did He not only makes him speak audibly, but he makes all parties listen to him, all England sitting round, and give in their comments, "groans," or "blushes," or "assent," indulging sometimes in triumphant malicious applications to the present day, when there is a palpable hit, supplying the look and attitude of the speaker, and the tone of his voice, and even rescuing his unutterable, wrecked and submerged thought,—for this orator begins speaking anywhere within sight of the beginning, and leaves off when the conclusion is visible Our merchant listens, restless, meanwhile, encouraging his fellow-auditors, when the speech grows dim and involved, and pleasantly congratulating them, when it runs smoothly, or, in touching soliloquy, he exclaims, "Poor Oliver, noble Oliver"—"Courage, my brave one!"

And all along, between the Letters and Speeches, as readers well remember, he has ready such a fresh top-of-the-morning salutation as conjures up the spirits of those days, and men go marching over English sward, not wired skeletons, but with firm, elastic muscles, and clang of armor on their thighs, if they wore swords, or the twang of psalms and canticles on their lips. His blunt, "Who are you?" put to the shadowy ghosts of history, they vanish into deeper obscurity than ever Vivid phantasmagorian pictures of what is transpiring in England in the meanwhile, there are, not a few, better than if you had been there to see.

All of Carlyle's works might well enough be embraced under the title of one of them, a good specimen brick, "On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History." Of this department, he is the Chief Professor in the World's University, and even leaves Plutarch behind. Such intimate and living, such loyal and generous sympathy with the heroes of history, not

one in one age only, but forty in forty ages, such an unparalleled reviewing and greeting of all past worth, with exceptions, to be sure,—but exceptions were the rule, before,—it was, indeed, to make this the age of review writing, as if now one period of the human story were completing itself, and getting its accounts settled. This soldier has told the stories with new emphasis, and will be a memorable hander-down of fame to posterity. And with what wise discrimination he has selected his men, with reference both to his own genius and to theirs: Mahomet, — Dante, — Cromwell, — Voltaire, — Johnson, — Burns, — Goethe, — Richter, — Schiller, — Mirabeau, could any of these have been spared? These we wanted to hear about. We have not as commonly the cold and refined judgment of the scholar and critic merely, but something more human and affecting. These eulogies have the glow and warmth of friendship. There is sympathy not with mere fames, and formless, incredible things, but with kindred men,—not transiently, but life-long he has walked with them.

The attitude of some,¹⁹⁸ in relation to Carlyle's love of heroes, and men of the sword, reminds us of the procedure at the anti-slavery meetings, when some member, being warmed, begins to speak with more latitude than usual of the Bible or the Church, for a few prudent and devout ones to spring a prayer upon him, as the saying is, that is, propose suddenly to unite in prayer, and so solemnize the minds of the audience, or dismiss them at once, which may oftener be to interrupt a true prayer by most gratuitous profanity. But the spring of this trap, we are glad to learn, has grown somewhat rusty, and is not so sure of late.

No doubt, some of Carlyle's worthies, should they ever return to earth, would find themselves unpleasantly put upon their good behavior, to sustain their characters, but if he can return a man's life more perfect to our hands, than it was left at his death, following out the design of its author, we shall have no great cause to complain. We do not want a Daguerreotype likeness. All biography is the life of Adam,—a much-experienced man,—and time withdraws something partial from the

story of every individual, that the historian may supply something general. If these virtues were not in this man, perhaps they are in his biographer,—no fatal mistake. Really, in any other sense, we never do, nor desire to, come at the historical man,—unless we rob his grave, that is the nearest approach. Why did he die, then? *He* is with his bones, surely.

No doubt, Carlyle has a propensity to *exaggerate* the heroic in history, that is, he creates you an ideal hero rather than another thing, he has most of that material. This we allow in all its senses, and in one narrower sense it is not so convenient. Yet what were history if he did not exaggerate it? How comes it that history never has to wait for facts, but for a man to write it? The ages may go on forgetting the facts never so long, he can remember two for every one forgotten. The musty records of history, like the catacombs, contain the perishable remains, but only in the breast of genius are embalmed the souls of heroes. There is very little of what is called criticism here, it is love and reverence, rather, which deal with qualities not relatively, but absolutely great, for whatever is admirable in a man is something infinite, to which we cannot set bounds. These sentiments allow the mortal to die, the immortal and divine to survive. There is something antique, even in his style of treating his subject, reminding us that Heroes and Demi-gods, Fates and Furies, still exist, the common man is nothing to him, but after death the hero is apotheosized and has a place in heaven, as in the religion of the Greeks.

Exaggeration¹ was ever any virtue attributed to a man without exaggeration² was ever any vice, without infinite exaggeration³. Do we not exaggerate ourselves to ourselves, or do we recognize ourselves for the actual men we are? Are we not all great men? Yet what are we actually to speak of? We live by exaggeration, what else is it to anticipate more than we enjoy? The lightning is an exaggeration of the light. Exaggerated history is poetry, and truth referred to a new standard. To a small man every greater is an exaggeration. He who cannot exaggerate is not qualified to utter truth. No truth we think was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, so that for the time

there seemed to be no other. Moreover, you must speak loud to those who are hard of hearing, and so you acquire a habit of shouting to those who are not. By an immense exaggeration we appreciate our Greek poetry and philosophy, and Egyptian ruins, our Shakespeares and Miltons, our Liberty and Christianity. We give importance to this hour over all other hours. We do not live by justice, but by grace. As the sort of justice which concerns us in our daily intercourse is not that administered by the judge, so the historical justice which we prize is not arrived at by nicely balancing the evidence. In order to appreciate any, even the humblest man, you must first, by some good fortune, have acquired a sentiment of admiration, even of reverence, for him, and there never were such exaggerators as these. Simple admiration for a hero renders a juster verdict than the wisest criticism, which necessarily degrades what is high to its own level.¹⁹⁹ There is no danger in short of saying too much in praise of one man, provided you can say more in praise of a better man. If by exaggeration a man can create for us a hero, where there was nothing but dry bones before, we will thank him, and let Dryasdust administer historical justice. This is where a true history properly begins, when some genius arises, who can turn the dry and musty records into poetry. As we say, looking to the future, that what is best is truest, so, in one sense, we may say looking into the past, for the only past that we are to look at, must also be future to us. The great danger is not of excessive partiality or sympathy with one, but of a shallow justice to many, in which, after all, none gets his deserts. Who has not experienced that praise is truer than naked justice? As if man were to be the judge of his fellows, and should repress his rising sympathy with the prisoner at the bar, considering the many honest men abroad, whom he had never countenanced.

To try him by the German rule of referring an author to his own standard, we will quote the following from Carlyle's remarks on history, and leave the reader to consider how far his practice has been consistent with his theory. "Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by experience, the writer fitted to compose history, is hitherto an unknown man. The expe-

nience itself would require all knowledge to record it, were the All-wisdom needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for omniscience than for human science, and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself, will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret, or, at most, in reverent Faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him, whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom history indeed reveals, but only all History and in Eternity, will clearly reveal."

Who lives in London to tell this generation who have been the great men of our race? We have read that on some exposed place in the city of Geneva, they have fixed a brazen indicator for the use of travelers, with the names of the mountain summits in the horizon marked upon it, "so that by taking sight across the index you can distinguish them at once. You will not mistake Mont Blanc, if you see him, but until you get accustomed to the panorama, you may easily mistake one of his court for the king." It stands there a piece of mute brass, that seems nevertheless to know in what vicinity it is and there perchance it will stand, when the nation that placed it there has passed away, still in sympathy with the mountains, forever discriminating in the desert.

So, we may say, stands this man, pointing as long as he lives, in obedience to some spiritual magnetism, to the summits in the historical horizon, for the guidance of his fellows.

Truly, our greatest blessings are very cheap. To have our sunlight without paying for it, without any duty levied,—to have our poet there in England, to furnish us entertainment, and what is better provocation, from year to year, all our lives long, to make the world seem richer for us, the age more respectable, and life better worth the living,—all without expense of acknowledgment even, but silently accepted out of the east, like morning light as a matter of course.

[A MOOSE HUNT]

While we were thus engaged in the twilight, we heard faintly, from far down the stream, what sounded like two strokes of a woodchopper's axe, echoing dully through the grim solitude. We are wont to liken many sounds, heard at a distance in the forest, to the stroke of an axe, because they resemble each other under those circumstances, and that is the one we commonly hear there. When we told Joe²⁰¹ of this, he exclaimed, "By George, I'll bet that was moose!" They make a noise like that. These sounds affected us strangely, and by their very resemblance to a familiar one, where they probably had so different an origin, enhanced the impression of solitude and wildness.

At starlight we dropped down the stream, which was a dead-water for three miles, or as far as the Moosehorn, Joe telling us that we must be very silent, and he himself making no noise with his paddle, while he urged the canoe along with effective impulses. It was a still night, and suitable for this purpose,—for if there is wind, the moose will smell you,—and Joe was very confident that he should get some. The harvest moon had just risen, and its level rays began to light up the forest on our right, while we glided downward in the shade on the same side, against the little breeze that was stirring. The lofty spiring tops of the spruce and fir were very black against the sky, and more distinct than by day, close bordering this broad avenue on each side, and the beauty of the scene, as the moon rose above the forest, it would not be easy to describe. A bat flew over our heads, and we heard a few faint notes of birds from time to time, perhaps the myrtle-bird for one, or the sudden plunge of a musquash, or saw one crossing the stream before us, or heard the sound of a rill emptying in, swollen by the recent rain. About a mile below the island, when the solitude seemed to be

growing more complete every moment, we suddenly saw the light and heard the crackling of a fire on the bank, and discovered the camp of the two explorers, they standing before it in their red shirts, and talking aloud of the adventures and profits of the day. They were just then speaking of a bargain, in which, as I understood, somebody had cleared twenty-five dollars. We glided by without speaking, close under the bank, within a couple of rods of them, and Joe, taking his horn, imitated the call of the moose, till we suggested that they might fire on us. This was the last we saw of them, and we never knew whether they detected or suspected us.

I have often wished since that I was with them. They search for timber over a given section, climbing hills and often high trees to look off,—explore the streams by which it is to be driven, and the like,—spend five or six weeks in the woods, they two alone, a hundred miles or more from any town,—roaming about, and sleeping on the ground where night overtakes them,—depending chiefly on the provisions they carry with them, though they do not decline what game they come across,—and then in the fall they return and make report to their employers, determining the number of teams that will be required the following winter. Experienced men get three or four dollars a day for this work. It is a solitary and adventurous life, and comes nearest to that of the trapper of the West, perhaps. They work ever with a gun as well as an axe, let their beards grow, and live without neighbors, not on an open plain, but far within a wilderness.

This discovery accounted for the sounds which we had heard, and destroyed the prospect of seeing moose yet awhile. At length, when we had left the explorers far behind, Joe laid down his paddle, drew forth his birch horn,—a straight one, about fifteen inches long and three or four wide at the mouth, tied round with strips of the same bark,—and standing up, imitated the call of the moose,—*ugh-ugh-ugh*, or *oo-oo-oo-oo*, and then a prolonged *oo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o*, and listened attentively for several minutes. We asked him what kind of noise he expected to hear. He said, that, if a moose heard it, he guessed we should find out,

we should hear him coming half a mile off, he would come close to, perhaps into, the water, and my companion must wait till he got fair sight, and then aim just behind the shoulder

The moose venture out to the river-side to feed and drink at night. Earlier in the season the hunters do not use a horn to call them out, but steal upon them as they are feeding along the sides of the stream, and often the first notice they have of one is the sound of the water dropping from its muzzle. An Indian whom I heard imitate the voice of the moose, and also that of the caribou and the deer, using a much longer horn than Joe's, told me that the first could be heard eight or ten miles, sometimes, it was a loud sort of bellowing sound, clearer and more sonorous than the lowing of cattle,—the caribou's a sort of snort,—and the small deer's like that of a lamb

At length we turned up the Moosehorn, where the Indians at the carry had told us that they killed a moose the night before. This is a very meandering stream, only a rod or two in width, but comparatively deep, coming in on the right, fitly enough named Moosehorn, whether from its windings or its inhabitants. It was bordered here and there by narrow meadows between the stream and the endless forest, affording favorable places for the moose to feed, and to call them out on. We proceeded half a mile up this, as through a narrow winding canal, where the tall, dark spruce and firs and arbor-vitæ towered on both sides in the moonlight, forming a perpendicular forest-edge of great height, like the spires of a Venice in the forest. In two places stood a small stack of hay on the bank, ready for the lumberer's use in the winter, looking strange enough there. We thought of the day when this might be a brook winding through smooth-shaven meadows on some gentleman's grounds, and seen by moonlight then, excepting the forest that now hems it in, how little changed it would appear!

Again and again Joe called the moose, placing the canoe close by some favorable point of meadow for them to come out on, but listened in vain to hear one come rushing through the woods, and concluded that they had been hunted too much thereabouts. We saw many times what to our imaginations

looked like a gigantic moose, with his horns peering from out the forest-edge, but we saw the forest only, and not its inhabitants, that night. So at last we turned about. There was now a little fog on the water, though it was a fine, clear night above. There were very few sounds to break the stillness of the forest. Several times we heard the hooting of a great horned-owl, as at home, and told Joe that he would call out the moose for him, for he made a sound considerably like the horn,—but Joe answered, that the moose had heard that sound a thousand times, and knew better, and oftener still we were startled by the plunge of a musquash. Once, when Joe had called again, and we were listening for moose, we heard come faintly echoing, or creeping from far, through the moss-clad aisles, a dull, dry, rushing sound, with a solid core to it, yet as if half smothered under the grasp of the luxuriant and fungus-like forest, like the shutting of a door in some distant entry of the damp and shaggy wilderness. If we had not been there, no mortal had heard it. When we asked Joe in a whisper what it was, he answered,—“Tree fall.” There is something singularly grand and impressive in the sound of a tree falling in a perfectly calm night like this, as if the agencies which overthrow it did not need to be excited, but worked with a subtle, deliberate, and conscious force, like a boa-constrictor, and more effectively than even in a windy day. If there is any such difference, perhaps it is because trees with the dews of the night on them are heavier than by day.

Having reached the camp, about ten o'clock, we kindled our fire and went to bed. Each of us had a blanket, in which he lay on the fir-twigs, with his extremities toward the fire, but nothing over his head. It was worth the while to lie down in a country where you could afford such great fires, that was one whole side, and the bright side, of our world. We had first rolled up a large log some eighteen inches through and ten feet long, for a back-log, to last all night, and then piled on the trees to the height of three or four feet, no matter how green or damp. In fact, we burned as much wood that night as would, with economy and an air-tight stove, last a poor family in one of our cities all winter.

It was very agreeable, as well as independent, thus lying in the open air, and the fire kept our uncovered extremities warm enough. The Jesuit missionaries used to say, that, in their journeys with the Indians in Canada, they lay on a bed which had never been shaken up since the creation, unless by earthquakes. It is surprising with what impunity and comfort one who has always lain in a warm bed in a close apartment, and studiously avoided drafts of air, can lie down on the ground without a shelter, roll himself in a blanket, and sleep before a fire, in a frosty autumn night, just after a long rain-storm, and even come soon to enjoy and value the fresh air.

I lay awake awhile, watching the ascent of the sparks through the firs, and sometimes their descent in half-extinguished cinders on my blanket. They were as interesting as fireworks, going up in endless successive crowds, each after an explosion, in an eager serpentine course, some to five or six rods above the tree-tops before they went out. We do not suspect how much our chimneys have concealed, and now air-tight stoves have come to conceal all the rest. In the course of the night, I got up once or twice and put fresh logs on the fire, making my companions curl up their legs.

When we awoke in the morning, (Saturday, September 17,) there was considerable frost whitening the leaves. We heard the sound of the chickadee, and a few faintly lisping birds, and also of ducks in the water about the island. I took a botanical account of stock of our domains before the dew was off, and found that the ground-hemlock, or American yew, was the prevailing undershrub. We breakfasted on tea, hard bread, and ducks.

Before the fog had fairly cleared away, we paddled down the stream again, and were soon past the mouth of the Moosehorn. These twenty miles of the Penobscot, between Moosehead and Chesuncook Lakes, are comparatively smooth, and a great part dead-water, but from time to time it is shallow and rapid, with rocks or gravel-beds, where you can wade across. There is no expanse of water, and no break in the forest, and the meadow is a mere edging here and there. There are no hills near the river nor within sight, except one or two distant mountains seen in a

few places. The banks are from six to ten feet high, but once or twice rise gently to higher ground. In many places the forest on the bank was but a thin strip, letting the light through from some alder-swamp or meadow behind. The conspicuous berry-bearing bushes and trees along the shore were the red osier, with its whitish fruit, hobble-bush, mountain-ash, tree-cranberry, choke-cherry, now ripe, alternate cornel, and naked viburnum. Following Joe's example, I ate the fruit of the last, and also of the hobble-bush, but found them rather insipid and seedy. I looked very narrowly at the vegetation, as we glided along close to the shore, and frequently made Joe turn aside for me to pluck a plant, that I might see by comparison what was primitive about my native river. Horehound, horsemint, and the sensitive fern grew close to the edge, under the willows and alders, and wool-grass on the islands, as along the Assabet River in Concord. It was too late for flowers, except a few asters, golden-rods, etc. In several places, we noticed the slight frame of a camp, such as we had prepared to set up, amid the forest by the river-side, where some lumberers or hunters had passed a night,—and sometimes steps cut in the muddy or clayey bank in front of it.

We stopped to fish for trout at the mouth of a small stream called Ragmuff, which came in from the west, about two miles below the Moosehorn. Here were the ruins of an old lumbering-camp, and a small space, which had formerly been cleared and burned over, was now densely overgrown with the red cherry and raspberries. While we were trying for trout, Joe, Indian-like, wandered off up the Ragmuff on his own errands, and when we were ready to start was far beyond call. So we were compelled to make a fire and get our dinner here, not to lose time. Some dark reddish birds, with grayer females, (perhaps purple finches,) and myrtle-birds in their summer dress, hopped within six or eight feet of us and our smoke. Perhaps they smelled the frying pork. The latter bird, or both, made the lisping notes which I had heard in the forest. They suggested that the few small birds found in the wilderness are on more familiar terms with the lumberman and hunter than those of the orchard and

clearing with the farmer I have since found the Canada jay, and partridges, both the black and the common, equally tame there, as if they had not yet learned to mistrust man entirely. The chickadee, which is at home alike in the primitive woods and in our wood-lots, still retains its confidence in the towns to a remarkable degree.

Joe at length returned, after an hour and a half, and said that he had been two miles up the stream exploring, and had seen a moose, but, not having the gun, he did not get him. We made no complaint, but concluded to look out for Joe the next time. However, this may have been a mere mistake, for we had no reason to complain of him afterwards. As we continued down the stream, I was surprised to hear him whistling "O Susanna," and several other such airs, while his paddle urged us along. Once he said, "Yes, Sir-ee." His common word was "Sartain." He paddled, as usual, on one side only, giving the birch an impulse by using the side as a fulcrum. I asked him how the ribs were fastened to the side rails. He answered, "I don't know, I never noticed." Talking with him about subsisting wholly on what the woods yielded, game, fish, berries, etc., I suggested that his ancestors did so, but he answered, that he had been brought up in such a way that he could not do it. "Yes," said he, "that's the way they got a living, like wild fellows, wild as bears. By George! I shan't go into the woods without provision,—hard bread, pork, etc." He had brought on a barrel of hard bread and stored it at the carry for his hunting. However, though he was a Governor's son, he had not learned to read.

At one place below this, on the east side, where the bank was higher and drier than usual, rising gently from the shore to a slight elevation, some one had felled the trees over twenty or thirty acres, and left them drying in order to burn. This was the only preparation for a house between the Moosehead carry and Chesuncook, but there was no hut nor inhabitants there yet. The pioneer thus selects a site for his house, which will, perhaps, prove the germ of a town.

My eyes were all the while on the trees, distinguishing between the black and white spruce and the fir. You paddle along

in a narrow canal through an endless forest, and the vision I have in my mind's eye, still, is of the small dark and sharp tops of tall fir and spruce trees, and pagoda-like arbor-vitæ, crowded together on each side, with various hard woods intermixed. Some of the arbor-vitæ were at least sixty feet high. The hard woods, occasionally occurring exclusively, were less wild to my eye. I fancied them ornamental grounds, with farm-houses in the rear. The canoe and yellow birch, beech, maple, and elm are Saxon and Norman, but the spruce and fir, and pines generally, are Indian. The soft engravings which adorn the annuals give no idea of a stream in such a wilderness as this. The rough sketches in Jackson's Reports on the Geology of Maine answer much better. At one place we saw a small grove of slender sapling white-pines, the only collection of pines that I saw on this voyage. Here and there, however, was a full-grown, tall, and slender, but defective one, what lumbermen call a *konchus* tree, which they ascertain with their axes, or by the knots. I did not learn whether this word was Indian or English. It reminded me of the Greek *κόγχη*, a conch or shell, and I amused myself with fancying that it might signify the dead sound which the trees yield when struck. All the rest of the pines had been driven off.

How far men go for the material of their houses! The inhabitants of the most civilized cities, in all ages, send into far, primitive forests, beyond the bounds of their civilization, where the moose and bear and savage dwell, for their pine-boards for ordinary use. And, on the other hand, the savage soon receives from cities iron arrow-points, hatchets, and guns to point his savageness with.

The solid and well-defined fir-tops, like sharp and regular spear-heads, black against the sky, gave a peculiar, dark, and sombre look to the forest. The spruce-tops have a similar, but more ragged outline,—their shafts also merely feathered below. The firs were somewhat oftener regular and dense pyramids. I was struck by this universal spiring upward of the forest evergreens. The tendency is to slender, spiring tops, while they are narrower below. Not only the spruce and fir, but even the arbor-vitæ and white pine, unlike the soft, spreading second-

growth, of which I saw none, all spire upwards, lifting a dense spear-head of cones to the light and air, at any rate, while their branches straggle after as they may, as Indians lift the ball over the heads of the crowd in their desperate game. In this they resemble grasses, as also palms somewhat. The hemlock is commonly a tent-like pyramid from the ground to its summit.

After passing through some long rips and by a large island, we reached an interesting part of the river called the Pine-Stream Dead-Water, about six miles below Ragmuff, where the river expanded to thirty rods in width and had many islands in it, with elms and canoe-birches, now yellowing, along the shore, and we got our first sight of Katadn.

Here, about two o'clock, we turned up a small branch three or four rods wide, which comes in on the right from the south, called Pine Stream, to look for moose signs. We had gone but a few rods before we saw very recent signs along the water's edge, the mud lifted up by their feet being quite fresh, and Joe declared that they had gone along there but a short time before. We soon reached a small meadow on the east side, at an angle in the stream, which was for the most part densely covered with alders. As we were advancing along the edge of this, rather more quietly than usual, perhaps, on account of the freshness of the signs,—the design being to camp up this stream, if it promised well,—I heard a slight crackling of twigs deep in the alders, and turned Joe's attention to it, whereupon he began to push the canoe back rapidly, and we had receded thus half a dozen rods, when we suddenly spied two moose standing just on the edge of the open part of the meadow which we had passed, not more than six or seven rods distant, looking round the alders at us. They made me think of great frightened rabbits, with their long ears and half-inquisitive, half-frightened looks, the true denizens of the forest, (I saw at once,) filling a vacuum which now first I discovered had not been filled for me,—*moose-men*, *wood-eaters*, the word is said to mean,—clad in a sort of Vermont gray, or homespun. Our Nimrod, owing to the retrograde movement, was now the farthest from the game, but being warned of its neighborhood, he hastily

stood up, and, while we ducked, fired over our heads one barrel at the foremost, which alone he saw, though he did not know what kind of creature it was, whereupon this one dashed across the meadow and up a high bank on the north-east, so rapidly as to leave but an indistinct impression of its outlines on my mind. At the same instant, the other, a young one, but as tall as a horse, leaped out into the stream, in full sight, and there stood cowering for a moment, or rather its disproportionate lowness behind gave it that appearance, and uttering two or three trumpeting squeaks. I have an indistinct recollection of seeing the old one pause an instant on the top of the bank in the woods, look toward its shivering young, and then dash away again. The second barrel was levelled at the calf, and when we expected to see it drop in the water, after a little hesitation, it, too, got out of the water, and dashed up the hill, though in a somewhat different direction. All this was the work of a few seconds, and our hunter, having never seen a moose before, did not know but they were deer, for they stood partly in the water, nor whether he had fired at the same one twice or not. From the style in which they went off, and the fact that he was not used to standing up and firing from a canoe, I judged that we should not see anything more of them. The Indian said that they were a cow and her calf,—a yearling, or perhaps two years old, for they accompany their dams so long, but, for my part, I had not noticed much difference in their size. It was but two or three rods across the meadow to the foot of the bank, which, like all the world thereabouts, was densely wooded, but I was surprised to notice, that, as soon as the moose had passed behind the veil of the woods, there was no sound of footsteps to be heard from the soft, damp moss which carpets that forest, and long before we landed, perfect silence reigned. Joe said, "If you wound 'em moose, me sure get 'em."

We all landed at once. My companion reloaded, the Indian fastened his birch, threw off his hat, adjusted his waistband, seized the hatchet, and set out. He told me afterward, casually, that before we landed he had seen a drop of blood on the bank, when it was two or three rods off. He proceeded rapidly up

the bank and through the woods, with a peculiar, elastic, noiseless, and stealthy tread, looking to right and left on the ground, and stepping in the faint tracks of the wounded moose, now and then pointing in silence to a single drop of blood on the handsome, shining leaves of the *Clintonia Borealis*, which, on every side, covered the ground, or to a dry fern-stem freshly broken, all the while chewing some leaf or else the spruce gum. I followed, watching his motions more than the trail of the moose.²⁰² After following the trail about forty rods in a pretty direct course, stepping over fallen trees and winding between standing ones, he at length lost it, for there were many other moose-tracks there, and, returning once more to the last blood-stain, traced it a little way and lost it again, and, too soon, I thought, for a good hunter, gave it up entirely. He traced a few steps, also, the tracks of the calf, but, seeing no blood, soon relinquished the search.

I observed, while he was tracking the moose, a certain reticence or moderation in him. He did not communicate several observations of interest which he made, as a white man would have done, though they may have leaked out afterward. At another time, when we heard a slight crackling of twigs and he landed to reconnoitre, he stepped lightly and gracefully, stealing through the bushes with the least possible noise, in a way in which no white man does,—as it were, finding a place for his foot each time.

About half an hour after seeing the moose, we pursued our voyage up Pine Stream, and soon, coming to a part which was very shoal and also rapid, we took out the baggage, and proceeded to carry it round, while Joe got up with the canoe alone. We were just completing our portage and I was absorbed in the plants, admiring the leaves of the *aster macrophyllus*, ten inches wide, and plucking the seeds of the great round-leaved orchis, when Joe exclaimed from the stream that he had killed a moose. He had found the cow-moose lying dead, but quite warm, in the middle of the stream, which was so shallow that it rested on the bottom, with hardly a third of its body above water. It was about an hour after it was shot, and it was swollen with water.

It had run about a hundred rods and sought the stream again, cutting off a slight bend. No doubt, a better hunter would have tracked it to this spot at once. I was surprised at its great size, horse-like, but Joe said it was not a large cow-moose. My companion went in search of the calf again. I took hold of the ears of the moose, while Joe pushed his canoe down stream toward a favorable shore, and so we made out, though with some difficulty, its long nose frequently sticking in the bottom, to drag it into still shallower water. It was a brownish black, or perhaps a dark iron-gray, on the back and sides, but lighter beneath and in front. I took the cord which served for the canoe's painter, and with Joe's assistance measured it carefully, the greatest distances first, making a knot each time. The painter being wanted, I reduced these measures that night with equal care to lengths and fractions of my umbrella, beginning with the smallest measures, and untying the knots as I proceeded, and when we arrived at Chesuncook the next day, finding a two-foot rule there, I reduced the last to feet and inches, and, moreover, I made myself a two-foot rule of a thin and narrow strip of black ash which would fold up conveniently to six inches. All this pains I took because I did not wish to be obliged to say merely that the moose was very large. Of the various dimensions which I obtained I will mention only two. The distance from the tips of the hoofs of the fore-feet, stretched out, to the top of the back between the shoulders, was seven feet and five inches. I can hardly believe my own measure, for this is about two feet greater than the height of a tall horse. The extreme length was eight feet and two inches. Another cow-moose, which I have since measured in those woods with a tape, was just six feet from the tip of the hoof to the shoulders, and eight feet long as she lay.

When afterward I asked an Indian at the carry how much taller the male was, he answered, "Eighteen inches," and made me observe the height of a cross-stake over the fire, more than four feet from the ground, to give me some idea of the depth of his chest. Another Indian, at Oldtown, told me that they were nine feet high to the top of the back, and that one which he tried

weighed eight hundred pounds. The length of the spinal projections between the shoulders is very great. A white hunter, who was the best authority among hunters that I could have, told me that the male was *not* eighteen inches taller than the female, yet he agreed that he was sometimes nine feet high to the top of the back, and weighed a thousand pounds. Only the male has horns, and they rise two feet or more above the shoulders,—spreading three or four, and sometimes six feet,—which would make him in all, sometimes, eleven feet high! According to this calculation, the moose is as tall, though it may not be as large, as the great Irish elk, *Megaceros Hibernicus*, of a former period, of which Mantell says that it “very far exceeded in magnitude any living species, the skeleton” being “upward of ten feet high from the ground to the highest point of the antlers.” Joe said, that, though the moose shed the whole horn annually, each new horn has an additional prong, but I have noticed that they sometimes have more prongs on one side than on the other. I was struck with the delicacy and tenderness of the hoofs, which divide very far up, and the one half could be pressed very much behind the other, thus probably making the animal surer-footed on the uneven ground and slippery moss-covered logs of the primitive forest. They were very unlike the stiff and battered feet of our horses and oxen. The bare, horny part of the fore-foot was just six inches long, and the two portions could be separated four inches at the extremities.

The moose is singularly grotesque and awkward to look at. Why should it stand so high at the shoulders? Why have so long a head? Why have no tail to speak of? for in my examination I overlooked it entirely. Naturalists say it is an inch and a half long. It reminded me at once of the camelopard, high before and low behind,—and no wonder, for, like it, it is fitted to browse on trees. The upper lip projected two inches beyond the lower for this purpose. This was the kind of man that was at home there, for, as near as I can learn, that has never been the residence, but rather the hunting-ground of the Indian. The moose will perhaps one day become extinct, but how naturally

then, when it exists only as a fossil relic, and unseen as that, may the poet or sculptor invent a fabulous animal with similar branching and leafy horns,—a sort of fucus or lichen in bone,—to be the inhabitant of such a forest as this!

Here, just at the head of the murmuring rapids, Joe now proceeded to skin the moose with a pocket-knife, while I looked on, and a tragical business it was,—to see that still warm and palpitating body pierced with a knife, to see the warm milk stream from the rent udder, and the ghastly naked red carcass appearing from within its seemly robe, which was made to hide it. The ball had passed through the shoulder-blade diagonally and lodged under the skin on the opposite side, and was partially flattened. My companion keeps it to show to his grandchildren. He has the shanks of another moose which he has since shot, skinned and stuffed, ready to be made into boots by putting in a thick leather sole. Joe said, if a moose stood fronting you, you must not fire, but advance toward him, for he will turn slowly and give you a fair shot. In the bed of this narrow, wild, and rocky stream, between two lofty walls of spruce and firs, a mere cleft in the forest which the stream had made, this work went on. At length Joe had stripped off the hide and dragged it trailing to the shore, declaring that it weighed a hundred pounds, though probably fifty would have been nearer the truth. He cut off a large mass of the meat to carry along, and another, together with the tongue and nose, he put with the hide on the shore to lie there all night, or till we returned. I was surprised that he thought of leaving this meat thus exposed by the side of the carcass, as the simplest course, not fearing that any creature would touch it, but nothing did. This could hardly have happened on the bank of one of our rivers in the eastern part of Massachusetts, but I suspect that fewer small wild animals are prowling there than with us. Twice, however, in this excursion I had a glimpse of a species of large mouse.

This stream was so withdrawn, and the moose-tracks were so fresh, that my companions, still bent on hunting, concluded to go farther up it and camp, and then hunt up or down at night. Half a mile above this, at a place where I saw the aster puniceus

and the beaked hazel, as we paddled along, Joe, hearing a slight rustling amid the alders, and seeing something black about two rods off, jumped up and whispered, "Bear!" but before the hunter had discharged his piece, he corrected himself to "Beaver!"—"Hedgehog!" The bullet killed a large hedgehog, more than two feet and eight inches long. The quills were rayed out and flattened on the hunder part of its back, even as if it had lain on that part, but were erect and long between this and the tail. Their points, closely examined, were seen to be finely bearded or barbed, and shaped like an awl, that is, a little concave, to give the barbs effect. After about a mile of still water, we prepared our camp on the right side, just at the foot of a considerable fall. Little chopping was done that night, for fear of scaring the moose. We had moose-meat fried for supper. It tasted like tender beef, with perhaps more flavor,—sometimes like veal.

After supper, the moon having risen, we proceeded to hunt a mile up this stream, first "carrying" about the falls. We made a picturesque sight, wending single-file along the shore, climbing over rocks and logs,—Joe, who brought up the rear, twirling his canoe in his hands as if it were a feather, in places where it was difficult to get along without a burden. We launched the canoe again from the ledge over which the stream fell, but after half a mile of still water, suitable for hunting, it became rapid again, and we were compelled to make our way along the shore, while Joe endeavored to get up in the birch alone, though it was still very difficult for him to pick his way amid the rocks in the night. We on the shore found the worst of walking, a perfect chaos of fallen and drifted trees, and of bushes projecting far over the water, and now and then we made our way across the mouth of a small tributary on a kind of net-work of alders. So we went tumbling on in the dark, being on the shady side, effectually scaring all the moose and bears that might be thereabouts. At length we came to a standstill, and Joe went forward to reconnoitre, but he reported that it was still a continuous rapid as far as he went, or half a mile, with no prospect of improvement, as if it were coming down from a mountain.

So we turned about, hunting back to the camp through the still water. It was a splendid moonlight night, and I, getting sleepy as it grew late,—for I had nothing to do,—found it difficult to realize where I was. This stream was much more unfrequented than the main one, lumbering operations being no longer carried on in this quarter. It was only three or four rods wide, but the fir and spruce through which it trickled seemed yet taller by contrast. Being in this dreamy state, which the moonlight enhanced, I did not clearly discern the shore, but seemed, most of the time, to be floating through ornamental grounds,—for I associated the fir-tops with such scenes,—very high up some Broadway, and beneath or between their tops, I thought I saw an endless succession of porticos and columns, cornices and façades, verandas and churches. I did not merely fancy this, but in my drowsy state such was the illusion. I fairly lost myself in sleep several times, still dreaming of that architecture and the nobility that dwelt behind and might issue from it, but all at once I would be aroused and brought back to a sense of my actual position by the sound of Joe's birch horn in the midst of all this silence calling the moose, *ugh, ugh, oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo*, and I prepared to hear a furious moose come rushing and crashing through the forest, and see him burst out on to the little strip of meadow by our side.

But, on more accounts than one, I had had enough of moose-hunting. I had not come to the woods for this purpose, nor had I foreseen it, though I had been willing to learn how the Indian manœuvred, but one moose killed was as good, if not as bad, as a dozen. The afternoon's tragedy, and my share in it, as it affected the innocence, destroyed the pleasure of my adventure. It is true, I came as near as is possible to come to being a hunter and miss it, myself, and as it is, I think that I could spend a year in the woods, fishing and hunting, just enough to sustain myself, with satisfaction. This would be next to living like a philosopher on the fruits of the earth which you had raised, which also attracts me. But this hunting of the moose merely for the satisfaction of killing him,—not even for the sake of his hide,—without making any extraordinary exertion or running any risk

yourself, is too much like going out by night to some wood-side pasture and shooting your neighbor's horses. These are God's own horses, poor, timid creatures, that will run fast enough as soon as they smell you, though they *are* nine feet high. Joe told us of some hunters who a year or two before had shot down several oxen by night, somewhere in the Maine woods, mistaking them for moose. And so might any of the hunters, and what is the difference in the sport, but the name? In the former case, having killed one of God's and *your own* oxen, you strip off its hide,—because that is the common trophy, and, moreover, you have heard that it may be sold for moccasins,—cut a steak from its haunches, and leave the huge carcass to smell to heaven for you. It is no better, at least, than to assist at a slaughter-house.

This afternoon's experience suggested to me how base or coarse are the motives which commonly carry men into the wilderness. The explorers and lumberers generally are all hirelings, paid so much a day for their labor, and as such they have no more love for wild nature than wood-sawyers have for forests. Other white men and Indians who come here are for the most part hunters, whose object is to slay as many moose and other wild animals as possible. But, pray, could not one spend some weeks or years in the solitude of this vast wilderness with other employments than these,—employments perfectly sweet and innocent and ennobling? For one that comes with a pencil to sketch or sing, a thousand come with an axe or rifle. What a coarse and imperfect use Indians and hunters make of Nature! No wonder that their race is so soon exterminated. I already, and for weeks afterward, felt my nature the coarser for this part of my woodland experience, and was reminded that our life should be lived as tenderly and daintily as one would pluck a flower.

With these thoughts, when we reached our camping-ground, I decided to leave my companions to continue moose-hunting down the stream, while I prepared the camp, though they requested me not to chop much nor make a large fire, for fear I should scare their game. In the midst of the damp fir-wood,

high on the mossy bank, about nine o'clock of this bright moon-light night, I kindled a fire, when they were gone, and, sitting on the fir-twigs, within sound of the falls, examined by its light the botanical specimens which I had collected that afternoon, and wrote down some of the reflections which I have here expanded, or I walked along the shore and gazed up the stream, where the whole space above the falls was filled with mellow light. As I sat before the fire on my fir-twigg seat, without walls above or around me, I remembered how far on every hand that wilderness stretched, before you came to cleared or cultivated fields, and wondered if any bear or moose was watching the light of my fire, for Nature looked sternly upon me on account of the murder of the moose.

Strange that so few ever come to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light,—to see its perfect success, but most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem *that* its true success! But the pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into boards and houses is no more its true and highest use than the truest use of a man is to be cut down and made into manure. There is a higher law affecting our relation to pines as well as to men. A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man. Can he who has discovered only some of the values of whale-bone and whale oil be said to have discovered the true use of the whale? Can he who slays the elephant for his ivory be said to have “seen the elephant”? These are petty and accidental uses, just as if a stronger race were to kill us in order to make buttons and flageolets of our bones, for everything may serve a lower as well as a higher use. Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine-trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it.

Is it the lumberman, then, who is the friend and lover of the pine, stands nearest to it, and understands its nature best? Is it the tanner who has barked it, or he who has boxed it for turpentine, whom posterity will fable to have been changed into a pine at last? No! no! it is the poet, he it is who makes the

truest use of the pine,—who does not fondle it with an axe, nor tickle it with a saw, nor stroke it with a plane,—who knows whether its heart is false without cutting into it,—who has not bought the stumpage of the township on which it stands. All the pines shudder and heave a sigh when *that* man steps on the forest floor. No, it is the poet, who loves them as his own shadow in the air, and lets them stand. I have been into the lumber-yard, and the carpenter's shop, and the tannery, and the lampblack-factory, and the turpentine clearing, but when at length I saw the tops of the pines waving and reflecting the light at a distance high over all the rest of the forest, I realized that the former were not the highest use of the pine. It is not their bones or hide or tallow that I love most. It is the living spirit of the tree, not its spirit of turpentine, with which I sympathize, and which heals my cuts. [It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still.]²⁰³

[AN INDIAN CAMP]²⁰⁴

It was rather windy, and therefore Joe concluded to hunt after midnight, if the wind went down, which the other Indians thought it would not do, because it was from the south. The two mixed bloods, however, went off up the river for moose at dark, before we arrived at their camp. This Indian camp was a slight, patched-up affair, which had stood there several weeks, built shed-fashion, open to the fire on the west. If the wind changed, they could turn it round. It was formed by two forked stakes and a cross-bar, with rafters slanted from this to the ground. The covering was partly an old sail, partly birch-bark, quite imperfect, but securely tied on, and coming down to the ground on the sides. A large log was rolled up at the back side for a head-board, and two or three moose-hides were spread on the ground with the hair up. Various articles of their wardrobe were tucked around the sides and corners, or under the roof. They were smoking moose-meat on just such a crate as is represented by With in De Bry's "*Collectio Peregrinationum*," published in 1588, and which the natives of Brazil called *boucan*,

(whence buccaneer,) on which were frequently shown pieces of human flesh drying along with the rest. It was erected in front of the camp over the usual large fire, in the form of an oblong square. Two stout forked stakes four or five feet apart and five feet high, were driven into the ground at each end, and then two poles ten feet long were stretched across over the fire, and smaller ones laid transversely on these a foot apart. On the last hung large, thin slices of moose-meat smoking and drying, a space being left open over the centre of the fire. There was the whole heart, black as a thirty-two pound ball, hanging at one corner. They said, that it took three or four days to cure this meat, and it would keep a year or more. Refuse pieces lay about on the ground in different stages of decay, and some pieces also in the fire, half buried and sizzling in the ashes, as black and dirty as an old shoe. These last I at first thought were thrown away, but afterwards found that they were being cooked. Also a tremendous rib-piece was roasting before the fire, being impaled on an upright stake forced in and out between the ribs. There was a moose-hide stretched and curing on poles like ours, and quite a pile of cured skins close by. They had killed twenty-two moose within two months, but, as they could use but very little of the meat, they left the carcasses on the ground. Altogether it was about as savage a sight as was ever witnessed, and I was carried back at once three hundred years. There were many torches of birch-bark, shaped like straight tin horns, lying ready for use on a stump outside.

For fear of dirt, we spread our blankets over their hides, so as not to touch them anywhere. The St. Francis Indian and Joe alone were there at first, and we lay on our backs talking with them till midnight. They were very sociable, and, when they did not talk with us, kept up a steady chatting in their own language. We heard a small bird just after dark, which, Joe said, sang at a certain hour in the night,—at ten o'clock, he believed. We also heard the hylodes and tree-toads, and the lumberers singing in their camp a quarter of a mile off. I told them that I had seen pictured in old books pieces of human flesh drying on these crates; whereupon they repeated some

tradition about the Mohawks eating human flesh, what parts they preferred, etc., and also of a battle with the Mohawks near Moosehead, in which many of the latter were killed, but I found that they knew but little of the history of their race, and could be entertained by stories about their ancestors as readily as any way. At first I was nearly roasted out, for I lay against one side of the camp, and felt the heat reflected not only from the birch-bark above, but from the side, and again I remembered the sufferings of the Jesuit missionaries, and what extremes of heat and cold the Indians were said to endure. I struggled long between my desire to remain and talk with them, and my impulse to rush out and stretch myself on the cool grass, and when I was about to take the last step, Joe, hearing my murmurs, or else being uncomfortable himself, got up and partially dispersed the fire. I suppose that that is Indian manners,—to defend yourself.

While lying there listening to the Indians, I amused myself with trying to guess at their subject by their gestures, or some proper name introduced. There can be no more startling evidence of their being a distinct and comparatively aboriginal race, than to hear this unaltered Indian language, which the white man cannot speak nor understand. We may suspect change and deterioration in almost every other particular, but the language which is so wholly unintelligible to us. It took me by surprise, though I had found so many arrow-heads, and convinced me that the Indian was not the invention of historians and poets. It was a purely wild and primitive American sound, as much as the barking of a *chickaree*, and I could not understand a syllable of it, but Paugus, had he been there, would have understood it. These Abenakis gossiped, laughed, and jested, in the language in which Eliot's Indian Bible is written, the language which has been spoken in New England who shall say how long? These were the sounds that issued from the wigwams of this country before Columbus was born, they have not yet died away, and, with remarkably few exceptions, the language of their forefathers is still copious enough for them. I felt that I stood, or rather lay, as near to the primitive man of America, that night, as any of its discoverers ever did.

From CAPE COD

[IMMORTALITY]

Why care for these dead bodies?²⁰⁵ They really have no friends but the worms or fishes. Their owners were coming to the New World, as Columbus and the Pilgrims did, they were within a mile of its shores, but, before they could reach it, they emigrated to a newer world than ever Columbus dreamed of, yet one of whose existence we believe that there is far more universal and convincing evidence—though it has not yet been discovered by science—than Columbus had of this, not merely mariner's tales and some paltry drift-wood and sea-weed, but a continual drift and instinct to all our shores. I saw their empty hulks that came to land, but they themselves, meanwhile, were cast upon some shore yet further west, toward which we are all tending, and which we shall reach at last, it may be through storm and darkness, as they did. No doubt, we have reason to thank God, that they have not been "shipwrecked into life again." The mariner who makes the safest port in Heaven, perchance, seems to his friends on earth to be shipwrecked, for they deem Boston Harbor the better place, though, perhaps, invisible to them, a skillful pilot comes to meet him, and the fairest and balmyest gales blow off that coast, his good ship makes the land in halcyon days, and he kisses the shore in rapture there, while his old hulk tosses in the surf here. It is hard to part with one's body, but, no doubt, it is easy enough to do without it when once it is gone. All their plans and hopes burst like a bubble! Infants by the score dashed on the rocks by the enraged Atlantic Ocean! No, no! If the *St John* did not make her port here, she has been telegraphed there. The strongest wind cannot stagger a Spirit, it is a Spirit's breath. A just man's purpose cannot be split on any Grampus or material rock, but itself will split rocks till it succeeds.²⁰⁶

[GLAD TIDINGS]

Let no one think that I do not love the old ministers. They were, probably, the best men of their generation, and they deserve that their biographies should fill the pages of the town histories. If I could but hear the "glad tidings" of which they tell, and which, perchance, they heard, I might write in a worthier strain than this.²⁰⁷

[THE SEA]²⁰⁸

Today it was the Purple Sea, an epithet which I should not before have accepted. There were distinct patches of the color of a purple grape with the bloom rubbed off. But first and last the sea is of all colors. Well writes Gilpin²⁰⁹ concerning "the brilliant hues which are continually playing on the surface of a quiet ocean," and this was not too turbulent at a distance from the shore. "Beautiful," says he, "no doubt in a high degree are those glimmering tints which often invest the tops of mountains, but they are mere coruscations compared with these marine colors, which are continually varying and shifting into each other in all the vivid splendor of the rainbow, through the space often of several leagues." Commonly, in calm weather, for half a mile from the shore, where the bottom tinges it, the sea is green, or greenish, as are some ponds, then blue for many miles, often with purple tinges, bounded in the distance by a light almost silvery stripe, beyond which there is generally a dark-blue rim, like a mountain ridge in the horizon, as if, like that, it owed its color to the intervening atmosphere. On another day it will be marked with long streaks, alternately smooth and rippled, light-colored and dark, even like our inland meadows in a freshet, and showing which way the wind sets.

Thus we sat on the foaming shore, looking on the wine-colored ocean,—

Θίν' ἔφ' ἄλως πολιῆς, ὁρώων ἐπὶ οἶνοπα ποντον

Here and there was a darker spot on its surface, the shadow of

a cloud, though the sky was so clear that no cloud would have been noticed otherwise, and no shadow would have been seen on the land, where a much smaller surface is visible at once. So, distant clouds and showers may be seen on all sides by a sailor in the course of a day, which do not necessarily portend rain where he is. In July we saw similar dark-blue patches where schools of Menhaden rippled the surface, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows of clouds. Sometimes the sea was spotted with them far and wide, such is its inexhaustible fertility. Close at hand you see their back fin, which is very long and sharp, projecting two or three inches above water. From time to time also we saw the white bellies of the Bass playing along the shore.

It was a poetic recreation to watch those distant sails steering for half fabulous ports, whose very names are a mysterious music to our ears: Fayal, and Babel-mandel, ay, and Chagres, and Panama,—bound to the famous Bay of San Francisco, and the golden streams of Sacramento and San Joaquin, to Feather River and the American Fork, where Sutter's Fort presides, and inland stands the City de los Angeles. It is remarkable that men do not sail the sea with more expectation. Nothing remarkable was ever accomplished in a prosaic mood. The heroes and discoverers have found true more than was previously believed, only when they were expecting and dreaming of something more than their contemporaries dreamed of, or even themselves discovered, that is, when they were in a frame of mind fitted to behold the truth. Referred to the world's standard, they are always insane. Even savages have indirectly surmised as much. Humboldt,²¹⁰ speaking of Columbus approaching the New World, says "The grateful coolness of the evening air, the ethereal purity of the starry firmament, the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to him by the land breeze, all led him to suppose (as we are told by Herrera,²¹¹ in the Decades) that he was approaching the garden of Eden, the sacred abode of our first parents. The Orinoco seemed to him one of the four rivers which, according to the venerable tradition of the ancient world, flowed from Paradise, to water and

divide the surface of the earth, newly adorned with plants" So even the expeditions for the discovery of El Dorado, and of the Fountain of Youth, led to real, if not compensatory discoveries

We discerned vessels so far off, when once we began to look, that only the tops of their masts in the horizon were visible, and it took a strong intention of the eye, and its most favorable side, to see them at all, and sometimes we doubted if we were not counting our eyelashes Charles Darwin states that he saw, from the base of the Andes, "the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although not less than twenty-six geographical miles distant," and that Anson²¹² had been surprised at the distance at which his vessels were discovered from the coast, without knowing the reason, namely, the great height of the land and the transparency of the air Steamers may be detected much farther than sailing vessels, for, as one says, when their hulls and masts of wood and iron are down, their smoky masts and streamers still betray them, and the same writer, speaking of the comparative advantages of bituminous and anthracite coal for war-steamers, states that, "from the ascent of the columns of smoke above the horizon, the motions of the steamers in Calais Harbor [on the coast of France] are at all times observable at Ramsgate [on the English coast], from the first lighting of the fires to the putting out at sea, and that in America the steamers burning the fat bituminous coal can be tracked at sea at least seventy miles before the hulls become visible, by the dense columns of black smoke pouring out of their chimneys, and trailing along the horizon "

Though there were numerous vessels at this great distance in the horizon on every side, yet the vast spaces between them, like the spaces between the stars, far as they were distant from us, so were they from one another—nay, some were twice as far from each other as from us,—impressed us with a sense of the immensity of the ocean, the "unfruitful ocean," as it has been called, and we could see what proportion man and his works bear to the globe As we looked off, and saw the water growing darker and darker and deeper and deeper the farther

we looked, till it was awful to consider, and it appeared to have no relation to the friendly land, either as shore or bottom,—of what use is a bottom if it is out of sight, if it is two or three miles from the surface, and you are to be drowned so long before you get to it, though it were made of the same stuff with your native soil²—over that ocean, where, as the Veda says, “there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to,” I felt that I was a land animal. The man in a balloon even may commonly alight on the earth in a few moments, but the sailor’s only hope is that he may reach the distant shore. I could then appreciate the heroism of the old navigator, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of whom it is related, that being overtaken by a storm when on his return from America, in the year 1583, far northeastward from where we were, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, just before he was swallowed up in the deep, he cried out to his comrades in the Hind, as they came within hearing, “We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land.” I saw that it would not be easy to realize

[THE SEA-SHORE]

The sea-shore is a sort of neutral ground, a most advantageous point from which to contemplate this world. It is even a trivial place. The waves forever rolling to the land are too far-traveled and untamable to be familiar. Creeping along the endless beach amid the sun-squawl and the foam, it occurs to us that we, too, are the product of sea-slime.

It is a wild, rank place, and there is no flattery in it. Strewn with crabs, horse-shoes, and razor clams, and whatever the sea casts up,—a vast *morgue*, where famished dogs may range in packs, and crows come daily to glean the pittance which the tide leaves them. The carcasses of men and beasts together lie stately up upon its shelf, rotting and bleaching in the sun and waves, and each tide turns them in their beds, and tucks fresh sand under them. There is naked Nature,—inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man, nibbling at the cliffy shore where gulls wheel amid the spray.

From A YANKEE IN CANADA

[THOREAU AT NOTRE DAME]

It was early in the afternoon²¹³ when we stepped ashore. With a single companion, I soon found my way to the church of Notre Dame. I saw that it was of great size and signified something. It is said to be the largest ecclesiastical structure in North America, and can seat ten thousand. It is two hundred and fifty-five and a half feet long, and the groined ceiling is eighty feet above your head. The Catholics are the only churches which I have seen worth remembering, which are not almost wholly profane. I do not speak only of the rich and splendid like this, but of the humblest of them as well. Coming from the hurrahing mob and the rattling carriages, we pushed aside the listed door of this church, and found ourselves instantly in an atmosphere which might be sacred to thought and religion, if one had any. There sat one or two women who had stolen a moment from the concerns of the day, as they were passing, but, if there had been fifty people there, it would still have been the most solitary place imaginable. They did not look up at us, nor did one regard another. We walked softly down the broad-aisle with our hats in our hands. Presently came in a troop of Canadians, in their homespun, who had come to the city in the boat with us, and one and all kneeled down in the aisle before the high altar to their devotions, somewhat awkwardly, as cattle prepare to lie down, and there we left them. As if you were to catch some farmer's sons from Marlboro', come to cattle-show, silently kneeling in Concord meeting-house some Wednesday! Would there not soon be a mob peeping in at the windows? It is true, these Roman Catholics, priests and all, impress me as a people who have fallen far behind the significance of their symbols. It is as if an ox had strayed into a church and were trying to bethink himself. Nevertheless, they are capable of reverence, but we Yankees are a people in whom this

sentiment has nearly died out, and in this respect we cannot be-think ourselves even as oxen I did not mind the pictures nor the candles, whether tallow or tin Those of the former which I looked at appeared tawdry It matters little to me whether the pictures are by a neophyte of the Algonquin or the Italian tribe But I was impressed by the quiet religious atmosphere of the place It was a great cave in the midst of a city, and what were the altars and the tinsel but the sparkling stalactics, into which you entered in a moment, and where the still atmosphere and the sombre light disposed to serious and profitable thought? Such a cave at hand, which you can enter any day, is worth a thousand of our churches which are open only Sundays—hardly long enough for an airing—and then filled with a bustling congregation—a church where the priest is the least part, where you do your own preaching, where the universe preaches to you and can be heard * * * * In Concord, to be sure, we do not need such Our forests are such a church, far grander and more sacred We dare not leave *our* meeting-houses open for fear they would be profaned Such a cave, such a shrine, in one of our groves, for instance, how long would it be respected? for what purposes would it be entered, by such baboons as we are? I think of its value not only to religion, but to philosophy and to poetry; besides a reading room, to have a thinking room in every city! Perchance the time will come when every house even will have not only its sleeping rooms, and dining room, and talking room or parlor, but its thinking room also, and the architects will put it into their plans Let it be furnished and ornamented with whatever conduces to serious and creative thought I should not object to the holy water, or any other simple symbols if it were consecrated by the imagination of the worshippers ²¹⁴

[FITNESS IN ATTIRE]

It was an atmosphere that made me think of the fur-trade, which is so interesting a department in Canada, for I had for all head covering a thin palm-leaf hat without lining, that cost

twenty-five cents, and over my coat one of those unspeakably cheap, as well as thin, brown linen sacks of the Oak Hall pattern, which every summer appear all over New England, thick as the leaves upon the trees. It was a thoroughly Yankee costume, which some of my fellow-travellers wore in the cars to save their coats a dusting. I wore mine, at first, because it looked better than the coat it covered, and last, because two coats were warmer than one, though one was thin and dirty. I never wear my best coat on a journey, though perchance I could show a certificate to prove that I have a more costly one, at least, at home, if that were all that a gentleman required. It is not wise for a traveller to go dressed. I should no more think of it than of putting on a clean dicky and blacking my shoes to go a fishing, as if you were going out to dine, when, in fact, the genuine traveller is going out to work hard, and fare harder—to eat a crust by the way-side whenever he can get it. Honest travelling is about as dirty work as you can do, and a man needs a pair of overalls for it. As for blacking my shoes in such a case, I should as soon think of blacking my face. I carry a piece of tallow to preserve the leather, and keep out the water, that's all, and many an officious shoe-black, who carried off my shoes when I was slumbering, mistaking me for a gentleman, has had occasion to repent it before he produced a gloss on them.

RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT²¹⁵

(CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE)

I heartily accept the motto,—“That government is best which governs least,” and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,—“That government is best which governs not at all,” and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient, but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool, for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man, for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves, and, if ever they should use it in earnest as a real one against each other, it will surely split. But it is not the less necessary for this, for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow, yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise,

but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way *It* does not keep the country free *It* does not settle the West *It* does not educate The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished, and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone, and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way, and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions, and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest ²¹⁶ But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?—in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience, but a

corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just, and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, aye, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned, they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small moveable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts, a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be

“Not a drum was heard, nor a funeral note,
As his corse to the ramparts we hurried,
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O’er the grave where our hero we buried ” 217

The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, &c. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense, but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones, and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw, or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others, as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders, serve the State chiefly with their heads, and, as they

rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without intending it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*, serve the State with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part, and they are commonly treated by it as enemies. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least —

"I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world"

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men appears to them useless and selfish, but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution, that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction, and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is un-

justly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact, that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.²¹⁸

Paley, a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," resolves all civil obligation into expediency, and he proceeds to say, "that so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God that the established government be obeyed, and no longer"—"This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley, but does any one think that Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

"A drab of state, a cloth-o'-silver slut,
To have her train borne up, and her soul trail in the dirt."

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity,

and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may* I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared, but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere, for that will leaven the whole lump There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them, who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing, who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition, but they do nothing in earnest and with effect They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret At most, they give only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and Godspeed, to the right, as it goes by them There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man, but it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it

All voting is a sort of gaming, like chequers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions, and betting naturally accompanies it The character of the voters is not staked I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right, but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail I am willing to leave it to the majority Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency Even voting *for the right* is *doing* nothing for it It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority There is but little virtue in

the action of masses of men When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote *They* will then be the only slaves Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession, but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to, shall we not have the advantage of his wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reason to despair of him He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one, thus proving that he is himself *available* for any purposes of the demagogue His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought Oh for a man who is a *man*, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault the population has been returned too large How many *men* are there to a square thousand mules in this country? Hardly one Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow,—one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance, whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the alms-houses are in good repair, and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund for the support of the widows and orphans that may be, who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the mutual insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself

to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong, he may still properly have other concerns to engage him, but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico,—see if I would go," and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war, is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at nought, as if the State were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that degree that it left off sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of order and civil government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin, comes its indifference, and from immoral it becomes, as it were, *unmoral*, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support, are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves,—the union between themselves and the State,—and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they stand in the same relation to the State, that the State does to the Union? And have not the same reasons prevented the State

from resisting the Union, which have prevented them from resisting the State³

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy it? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing that you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due, but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see that you are never cheated again. Action from principle,—the perception and the performance of right,—changes things and relations, it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with any thing which was. It not only divides states and churches, it divides families, aye, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist. Shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority?²¹⁹ Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority, was the only offence never contemplated by government, else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those who placed him there,

but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go perchance it will wear smooth, —certainly the machine will wear out If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil, but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn

As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone I have other affairs to attend to I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad A man has not every thing to do, but something, and because he cannot do *every thing*, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong It is not my business to be petitioning the governor or the legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me, and, if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way its very Constitution is the evil This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconciliatory, but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it So is all change for the better, like birth and death which convulse the body

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors, constitutes a majority of one already

I meet this American government, or its representative the

State government, directly, and face to face, once a year, no more, in the person of its tax-gatherer, this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it, and it then says distinctly, Recognize me, and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with,—for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel,—and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action? I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name,—if ten *honest* men only,—aye, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America.²²⁰ For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be what is once well done is done for ever. But we love better to talk about it than we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State's ambassador, who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina,²²¹ were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister,—though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her,—the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day,

the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race, should find them, on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her but *against* her,—the only house in a slave-state in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority, it is not even a minority then, but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do any thing, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man's real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods,—though both will serve the same purpose,—because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have

not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man—not to make any invidious comparison—is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue, for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him, and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer, while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the “means” are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavour to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. “Show me the tribute-money,” said he,—and one took a penny out of his pocket,—If you use money which has the image of Cæsar on it, and which he has made current and valuable, that is, *if you are men of the State*, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Cæsar’s government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it, “Render therefore to Cæsar that which is Cæsar’s, and to God those things which are God’s,”—leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which, for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences of disobedience to it to their property and families. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all

my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly and at the same time comfortably in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property, that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself, always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said,—“If a State is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame, if a State is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame.” No. until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State, than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. “Pay it,” it said, “or be locked up in the jail.” I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster, for I was not the State’s schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing—“Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined.” This I gave to the town-clerk, and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish

to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since, though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to, but I did not know where to find a complete list.

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once²²² on this account, for one night, and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through, before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder, for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hinderance, and *they* were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body, just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical

strength I was not born to be forced I will breathe after my own fashion Let us see who is the strongest What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I They force me to become like themselves I do not hear of *men* being *forced* to live this way or that by masses of men What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money or your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do I cannot help that It must help itself, do as I do It is not worth the while to snivel about it I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society I am not the son of the engineer I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies, and so a man

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the door-way, when I entered But the jailer said, "Come, boys, it is time to lock up," and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer, as "a first-rate fellow and a clever man" When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there The rooms were whitewashed once a month, and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there, and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course, and, as the world goes, I believe he was "Why," said he, "they accuse me of burning a barn, but I never did it" As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there, and so a barn was burnt He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some

three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer, but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated

He occupied one window, and I the other, and I saw, that, if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room, for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again, but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp

It was like travelling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village, for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating It was to see my native village in the light of the middle ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn,—a wholly new and rare experience to me It was a closer view of my native town I was fairly inside of it I never had seen its institutions before This is one of its peculiar institutions, for it is a shire town I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding

a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left, but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after, he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon, so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison,—for some one interfered,²²⁸ and paid the tax,—I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth, and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man, and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene,—the town, and State, and country,—greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends, that their friendship was for summer weather only, that they did not greatly purpose to do right, that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are, that, in their sacrifices to humanity, they ran no risks, not even to their property, that, after all, they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly, for I believe that most of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the grating of a jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my

conduct, and in half an hour,—for the horse was soon tackled,—was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen

This is the whole history of "My Prisons"

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject, and, as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man, or a musket to shoot one with,—the dollar is innocent,—but I am concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his action be biased by obstinacy, or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant, they would do better if they knew how why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think, again, this is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill-will, without personal feeling of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their

present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately, you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But, if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect, but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed I have reason to suspect myself on this head, and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and state governments, and the spirit of the people, to discover a pretext for conformity. I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better a patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good, the law and the courts are very respectable, even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable and rare things, to be

thankful for, such as a great many have described them, but seen from a point of view a little higher, they are what I have described them, seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, un-wise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself, but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or kindred subjects, content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them, but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government, but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom and eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency, or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may

consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given by him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87. "I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort, I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which the various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, "Because it was a part of the original compact,—let it stand." Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect,—what, for instance, it behoves a man to do here in America to-day with regard to slavery, but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer as the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man,—from which what new and singular code of social duties might be inferred?—"The manner," says he, "in which the government of those States where slavery exists are to regulate it, is for their own consideration, under their responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me, and they never will."*

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humility, but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountain-head.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators,

*These extracts have been inserted since the Lecture was read
[Thoreau's note.]

politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand, but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak, who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written, yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation?

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor, which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose, if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who

fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen

SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS²²⁴

I lately attended a meeting of the citizens of Concord, expecting, as one among many, to speak on the subject of slavery in Massachusetts, but I was surprised and disappointed to find that what had called my townsmen together was the destiny of Nebraska,²²⁵ and not of Massachusetts, and that what I had to say would be entirely out of order. I had thought that the house was on fire, and not the prairie, but though several of the citizens of Massachusetts are now in prison for attempting to rescue a slave from her own clutches, not one of the speakers at that meeting expressed regret for it, not one even referred to it. It was only the disposition of some wild lands a thousand miles off, which appeared to concern them. The inhabitants of Concord are not prepared to stand by one of their own bridges, but talk only of taking up a position on the highlands beyond the Yellowstone river. Our Buttricks, and Davises, and Hosmers are retreating thither, and I fear that they will have no Lexington Common between them and the enemy. There is not one slave in Nebraska, there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts.

They who have been bred in the school of politics fail now and always to face the facts. Their measures are half measures and make-shifts, merely. They put off the day of settlement indefinitely, and meanwhile, the debt accumulates. Though the Fugitive Slave Law had not been the subject of discussion on that occasion, it was at length faintly resolved by my townsmen, at an adjourned meeting, as I learn, that the compromise compact of 1820 having been repudiated by one of the parties, 'Therefore, the Fugitive Slave Law must be repealed.' But this is not the reason why an iniquitous law should be repealed. The fact which the politician faces is merely, that there is less honor among thieves than was supposed, and not the fact that they are thieves.

As I had no opportunity to express my thoughts at that meeting, will you allow me to do so here?

Again it happens that the Boston Court House is full of armed men, holding prisoner and trying a MAN, to find out if he is not really a SLAVE Does any one think that Justice or God awaits Mr Loring's decision?²²⁶ For him to sit there deciding still, when this question is already decided from eternity to eternity, and the unlettered slave himself, and the multitude around, have long since heard and assented to the decision, is simply to make himself ridiculous We may be tempted to ask from whom he received his commission, and who he is that received it, what novel statutes he obeys, and what precedents are to him of authority Such an arbiter's very existence is an impertinence We do not ask him to make up his mind, but to make up his pack

I listen to hear the voice of a Governor,²²⁷ Commander-in-Chief of the forces of Massachusetts I hear only the creaking of crickets and the hum of insects which now fill the summer air The Governor's exploit is to review the troops on muster days I have seen him on horseback, with his hat off, listening to a chaplain's prayer It chances that is all I have ever seen of a Governor I think that I could manage to get along without one If *he* is not of the least use to prevent my being kidnapped, pray of what important use is he likely to be to me? When freedom is most endangered, he dwells in the deepest obscurity A distinguished clergyman told me that he chose the profession of a clergyman, because it afforded the most leisure for literary pursuits I would recommend to him the profession of a Governor

Three years ago, also, when the Simm's tragedy²²⁸ was acted, I said to myself, there is such an officer, if not such a man, as the Governor of Massachusetts,—what has he been about the last fortnight? Has he had as much as he could do to keep on the fence during this moral earthquake? It seemed to me that no keener satire could have been aimed at, no more cutting insult have been offered to that man, than just what happened—the absence of all inquiry after him in that crisis The worst and the most I chance to know of him is, that he did not improve that opportunity to make himself known, and worthily known

He could at least have *resigned* himself into fame. It appeared to be forgotten that there was such a man, or such an office. Yet no doubt he was endeavoring to fill the gubernatorial chair all the while. He was no Governor of mine. He did not govern me.

But at last, in the present case, the Governor was heard from. After he and the United States Government had perfectly succeeded in robbing a poor innocent black man of his liberty for life, and, as far as they could, of his Creator's likeness in his breast, he made a speech to his accomplices, at a congratulatory supper!

I have read a recent law of this State, making it penal for 'any officer of the Commonwealth' to 'detain, or aid in the detention,' any where within its limits, 'of any person, for the reason that he is claimed as a fugitive slave.' Also, it was a matter of notoriety that a writ of replevin to take the fugitive out of the custody of the United States Marshal could not be served, for want of sufficient force to aid the officer.

I had thought that the Governor was in some sense the executive officer of the State, that it was his business, as a Governor, to see that the laws of the State were executed, while, as a man, he took care that he did not, by so doing, break the laws of humanity, but when there is any special important use for him, he is useless, or worse than useless, and permits the laws of the State to go unexecuted. Perhaps I do not know what are the duties of a Governor, but if to be a Governor requires to subject one's self to so much ignominy without remedy, if it is to put a restraint upon my manhood, I shall take care never to be Governor of Massachusetts. I have not read far in the statutes of this Commonwealth. It is not profitable reading. They do not always say what is true, and they do not always mean what they say. What I am concerned to know is, that that man's influence and authority were on the side of the slaveholder, and not of the slave—of the guilty, and not of the innocent—of injustice, and not of justice. I never saw him of whom I speak, indeed, I did not know that he was Governor until this event occurred. I heard of him and Anthony Burns at the same time,

and thus, undoubtedly, most will hear of him. So far am I from being governed by him. I do not mean that it was any thing to his discredit that I had not heard of him, only that I heard what I did. The worst I shall say of him is, that he proved no better than the majority of his constituents would be likely to prove. In my opinion, he was not equal to the occasion.

The whole military force of the State is at the service of a Mr. Suttle, a slaveholder from Virginia, to enable him to catch a man whom he calls his property, but not a soldier is offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped! Is this what all these soldiers, all this *training* has been for these seventy-nine years past? Have they been trained merely to rob Mexico, and carry back fugitive slaves to their masters?

These very nights, I heard the sound of a drum in our streets. There were men *training* still, and for what? I could with an effort pardon the cockerels of Concord for crowing still, for they, perchance, had not been beaten that morning, but I could not excuse this rub-a-dub of the 'trainers'. The slave was carried back by exactly such as these, *i. e.*, by the soldier, of whom the best you can say in this connection is, that he is a fool made conspicuous by a painted coat.

Three years ago, also, just a week after the authorities of Boston assembled to carry back a perfectly innocent man, and one whom they knew to be innocent, into slavery, the inhabitants of Concord caused the bells to be rung and the cannons to be fired, to celebrate their liberty—and the courage and love of liberty of their ancestors who fought at the bridge. As if *those* three millions had fought for the right to be free themselves, but to hold in slavery three millions others. Now-a-days, men wear a fool's cap, and call it a liberty cap. I do not know but there are some, who, if they were tied to a whipping-post, and could get but one hand free, would use it to ring the bells and fire the cannons, to celebrate *their* liberty. So some of my townsmen took the liberty to ring and fire, that was the extent of their freedom, and when the sound of the bells died away, their liberty died away also, when the powder was all expended, their liberty went off with the smoke.

The joke could be no broader, if the inmates of the prisons were to subscribe for all the powder to be used in such salutes, and hire the jailors to do the firing and ringing for them, while they enjoyed it through the grating

This is what I thought about my neighbors

Every humane and intelligent inhabitant of Concord, when he or she heard those bells and those cannons, thought not with pride of the events of the 19th of April, 1775, but with shame of the events of the 12th of April, 1851 But now we have half buried that old shame under a new one

Massachusetts sat waiting Mr Loring's decision, as if it could in any way affect her own criminality Her crime, the most conspicuous and fatal crime of all, was permitting him to be the umpire in such a case It was really the trial of Massachusetts Every moment that she hesitated to set this man free—every moment that she now hesitates to atone for her crime, she is convicted The Commissioner on her case is God, not Edward G God, but simple God

I wish my countrymen to consider, that whatever the human law may be, neither an individual nor a nation can ever commit the least act of injustice against the obscurest individual, without having to pay the penalty for it A government which deliberately enacts injustice, and persists in it, will at length ever become the laughing-stock of the world

Much has been said about American slavery, but I think that we do not even yet realize what slavery is If I were seriously to propose to Congress to make mankind into sausages, I have no doubt that most of the members would smile at my proposition, and if any believed me to be in earnest, they would think that I proposed something much worse than Congress had ever done But if any of them will tell me that to make a man into a sausage would be much worse,—would be any worse, than to make him into a slave,—than it was to enact the Fugitive Slave Law, I will accuse him of foolishness, of intellectual incapacity, of making a distinction without a difference The one is just as reasonable a proposition as the other

I hear a good deal said about trampling this law under foot. Why, one need not go out of his way to do that. This law rises not to the level of the head or the reason, its natural habitat is in the dirt. It was born and bred, and has its life only in the dust and mire, on a level with the feet, and he who walks with freedom, and does not with Hindoo mercy avoid treading on every venomous reptile, will inevitably tread on it, and so trample it under foot,—and Webster, its maker, with it, like the dirt-bug and its ball.

Recent events will be valuable as a criticism on the administration of justice in our midst, or, rather, as showing what are the true resources of justice in any community. It has come to this, that the friends of liberty, the friends of the slave, have shuddered when they have understood that his fate was left to the legal tribunals of the country to be decided. Free men have no faith that justice will be awarded in such a case, the judge may decide this way or that, it is a kind of accident, at best. It is evident that he is not a competent authority in so important a case. It is no time, then, to be judging according to his precedents, but to establish a precedent for the future. I would much rather trust to the sentiment of the people. In their vote, you would get something of some value, at least, however small, but, in the other case, only the trammelled judgment of an individual, of no significance, be it which way it might.

It is to some extent fatal to the courts, when the people are compelled to go behind them. I do not wish to believe that the courts were made for fair weather, and for very civil cases merely,—but think of leaving it to any court in the land to decide whether more than three millions of people, in this case, a sixth part of a nation, have a right to be freemen or not! But it has been left to the courts of *justice*, so-called—to the Supreme Court of the land—and, as you all know, recognizing no authority but the Constitution, it has decided that the three millions are, and shall continue to be, slaves. Such judges as these are merely the inspectors of a pick-lock and murderer's tools, to tell him whether they are in working order or not,

and there they think that their responsibility ends. There was a prior case on the docket, which they, as judges appointed by God, had no right to skip, which having been justly settled, they would have been saved from this humiliation. It was the case of the murderer himself.

The law will never make men free, it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order, who observe the law when the government breaks it.

Among human beings, the judge whose words seal the fate of a man furthest into eternity, is not he who merely pronounces the verdict of the law, but he, whoever he may be, who, from a love of truth, and unprejudiced by any custom or enactment of men, utters a true opinion or *sentence* concerning him. He it is that *sentences* him. Whoever has discerned truth, has received his commission from a higher source than the chiefest justice in the world, who can discern only law. He finds himself constituted judge of the judge—Strange that it should be necessary to state such simple truths.

I am more and more convinced that, with reference to any public question, it is more important to know what the country thinks of it, than what the city thinks. The city does not *think* much. On any moral question, I would rather have the opinion of Boxboro' than of Boston and New York put together. When the former speaks, I feel as if somebody *had* spoken, as if *humanity* was yet, and a reasonable being had asserted its rights,—as if some unprejudiced men among the country's hills had at length turned their attention to the subject, and by a few sensible words redeemed the reputation of the race. When, in some obscure country town, the farmers come together to a special town meeting, to express their opinion on some subject which is vexing the land, that, I think, is the true Congress, and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States.

It is evident that there are, in this Commonwealth, at least, two parties, becoming more and more distinct—the party of the city, and the party of the country. I know that the country is mean enough, but I am glad to believe that there is a slight

difference in her favor But as yet, she has few, if any organs, through which to express herself The editorials which she reads, like the news, come from the sea-board Let us, the inhabitants of the country, cultivate self-respect Let us not send to the city for aught more essential than our broadcloths and groceries, or, if we read the opinions of the city, let us entertain opinions of our own

Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the Press as has already been made, and with effect, on the Church The Church has much improved within a few years, but the Press is almost, without exception, corrupt I believe that, in this country, the Press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the Church did in its worst period We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper At any meeting of politicians,—like that at Concord the other evening, for instance,—how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible! how pertinent to quote from a newspaper or from the Constitution! The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking It is a Bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail, and thousands of missionaries, are continually dispensing It is, in short, the only book which America has printed, and which America reads So wide is its influence The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support Your tax is commonly one cent daily, and it costs nothing for pew hire But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner, as well as my own convictions, when I say, that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country And as they live and rule only by their servility, and appealing to the worst, and not the better nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit

The *Liberator* and the *Commonwealth* were the only papers

in Boston, as far as I know, which made themselves heard in condemnation of the cowardice and meanness of the authorities of that city, as exhibited in '51. The other journals, almost without exception, by their manner of referring to and speaking of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the carrying back of the slave Simms, insulted the common sense of the country, at least. And, for the most part, they did this, one would say, because they thought so to secure the approbation of their patrons, not being aware that a sounder sentiment prevailed to any extent in the heart of the Commonwealth. I am told that some of them have improved of late, but they are still eminently time-serving. Such is the character they have won.

But, thank fortune, this preacher can be even more easily reached by the weapons of the reformer than could the recalcitrant priest. The free men of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once. One whom I respect told me that he purchased Mitchell's *Citizen* in the cars, and then threw it out the window. But would not his contempt have been more fatally expressed, if he had not bought it?

Are they Americans? are they New Englanders? are they inhabitants of Lexington, and Concord, and Framingham, who read and support the *Boston Post, Mail, Journal, Advertiser, Courier, and Times*? Are these the Flags of our Union? I am not a newspaper reader, and may omit to name the worst.

Could slavery suggest a more complete servility than some of these journals exhibit? Is there any dust which their conduct does not lick, and make fouler still with its slime? I do not know whether the *Boston Herald* is still in existence, but I remember to have seen it about the streets when Simms was carried off. Did it not act its part well—serve its master faithfully? How could it have gone lower on its belly? How can a man stoop lower than he is low? do more than put his extremities in the place of the head he has? than make his head his lower extremity? When I have taken up this paper with my cuffs turned up, I have heard the gurgling of the sewer through every column. I have felt that I was handling a paper picked

out of the public gutters, a leaf from the gospel of the gambling-house, the groggery and the brothel, harmonizing with the gospel of the Merchants' Exchange

The majority of the men of the North, and of the South, and East, and West, are not men of principle. If they vote, they do not send men to Congress on errands of humanity, but while their brothers and sisters are being scourged and hung for loving liberty, while—I might here insert all that slavery implies and is—it is the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone and gold which concerns them. Do what you will, O Government! with my wife and children, my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your commands to the letter. It will indeed grieve me if you hurt them, if you deliver them to overseers to be hunted by hounds or to be whipped to death, but nevertheless, I will peaceably pursue my chosen calling on this fair earth, until perchance, one day, when I have put on mourning for them dead, I shall have persuaded you to relent. Such is the attitude, such are the words of Massachusetts.

Rather than do thus, I need not say what match I would touch, what system endeavor to blow up,—but as I love my life, I would side with the light, and let the dark earth roll from under me, calling my mother and my brother to follow.

I would remind my countrymen, that they are to be men first, and Americans only at a late and convenient hour. No matter how valuable law may be to protect your property, even to keep soul and body together, if it do not keep you and humanity together.

I am sorry to say, that I doubt if there is a judge in Massachusetts who is prepared to resign his office, and get his living innocently, whenever it is required of him to pass sentence under a law which is merely contrary to the law of God. I am compelled to see that they put themselves, or rather, are by character, in this respect, exactly on a level with the marine who discharges his musket in any direction he is ordered to. They are just as much tools and as little men. Certainly, they are not the more to be respected, because their master enslaves their understandings and consciences, instead of their bodies.

The judges and lawyers,—simply as such, I mean,—and all men of expediency, try this case by a very low and incompetent standard. They consider, not whether the Fugitive Slave Law is right, but whether it is what they call *constitutional*. Is virtue constitutional, or vice? Is equity constitutional, or iniquity? In important moral and vital questions like this, it is just as impertinent to ask whether a law is constitutional or not, as to ask whether it is profitable or not. They persist in being the servants of the worst of men, and not the servants of humanity. The question is not whether you or your grandfather, seventy years ago, did not enter into an agreement to serve the devil, and that service is not accordingly now due, but whether you will not now, for once and at last, serve God,—in spite of your own past recreancy, or that of your ancestor,—by obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION, which He, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being.

The amount of it is, if the majority vote the devil to be God, the minority will live and behave accordingly, trusting that some time or other, by some Speaker's casting vote, perhaps, they may reinstate God. This is the highest principle I can get out of or invent for my neighbors. These men act as if they believed that they could safely slide down hill a little way—or a good way—and would surely come to a place, by and by, where they could begin to slide up again. This is expediency, or choosing that course which offers the slightest obstacles to the feet, that is, a down-hill one. But there is no such thing as accomplishing a righteous reform by the use of 'expediency'. There is no such thing as sliding up hill. In morals, the only sliders are backsliders.

Thus we steadily worship Mammon, both School, and State, and Church, and the Seventh Day curse God with a tintamar from one end of the Union to the other.

Will mankind never learn that policy is not morality—that it never secures any moral right, but considers merely what is expedient? chooses the available candidate, who is invariably the devil,—and what right have his constituents to be surprised, because the devil does not behave like an angel of light?

What is wanted is men, not of policy, but of probity—who recognize a higher law than the Constitution, or the decision of the majority. The fate of the country does not depend on how you vote at the polls—the worst man is as strong as the best at that game, it does not depend on what kind of paper you drop into the ballot-box once a year, but on what kind of man you drop from your chamber into the street every morning.

What should concern Massachusetts is not the Nebraska Bill, nor the Fugitive Slave Bill, but her own slaveholding and servility. Let the State dissolve her union with the slaveholder. She may wriggle and hesitate, and ask leave to read the Constitution once more, but she can find no respectable law or precedent which sanctions the continuance of such a Union for an instant.

Let each inhabitant of the State dissolve his union with her, as long as she delays to do her duty.

The events of the past month teach me to distrust Fame. I see that she does not finely discriminate, but coarsely hurrahs. She considers not the simple heroism of an action, but only as it is connected with its apparent consequences. She praises till she is hoarse the easy exploit of the Boston tea party, but will be comparatively silent about the braver and more disinterestedly heroic attack on the Boston Court-House, simply because it was unsuccessful!

Covered with disgrace, the State has sat down coolly to try for their lives and liberties the men who attempted to do its duty for it. And this is called *justice*! They who have shown that they can behave particularly well may perchance be put under bonds for *their good behavior*. They whom truth requires at present to plead guilty, are of all the inhabitants of the State, preeminently innocent. While the Governor, and the Mayor, and countless officers of the Commonwealth, are at large, the champions of liberty are imprisoned.

Only they are guiltless, who commit the crime of contempt of such a Court. It behoves every man to see that his influence is on the side of justice, and let the courts make their own characters. My sympathies in this case are wholly with the accused,

and wholly against the accusers and their judges Justice is sweet and musical, but injustice is harsh and discordant The judge still sits grinding at his organ, but it yields no music, and we hear only the sound of the handle He believes that all the music resides in the handle, and the crowd toss him their coppers the same as before

Do you suppose that that Massachusetts which is now doing these things,—which hesitates to crown these men, some of whose lawyers, and even judges, perchance, may be driven to take refuge in some poor quibble, that they may not wholly outrage their instinctive sense of justice,—do you suppose that she is any thing but base and servile² that she is the champion of liberty³

Show me a free State, and a court truly of justice, and I will fight for them, if need be, but show me Massachusetts, and I refuse her my allegiance, and express contempt for her courts

The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable,—of a bad one, to make it less valuable We can afford that railroad, and all other merely material stock, should lose some of its value, for that only compels us to live more simply and economically, but suppose that the value of life itself should be diminished¹ How can we make a less demand on man and nature, how live more economically in respect to virtue and all noble qualities, than we do² I have lived for the last month,—and I think that every man in Massachusetts capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have had a similar experience,—with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss I did not know at first what ailed me At last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country I had never respected the Government near to which I had lived, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, minding my private affairs, and forget it For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent less since Massachusetts last deliberately sent back an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery I dwelt before, perhaps, in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between*

heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell *wholly within* hell. The site of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with volcanic scoræ and cinders, such as Milton describes in the infernal regions. If there is any hell more unprincipled than our rulers, and we, the ruled, I feel curious to see it. Life itself being worth less, all things with it, which minister to it, are worth less. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls—a garden laid out around—and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits, &c., and discover all at once that your villa, with all its contents, is located in hell, and that the justice of the peace has a cloven foot and a forked tail—do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes?

I feel that, to some extent, the State has fatally interfered in my lawful business. It has not only interrupted me in my passage through Court street on errands of trade, but it has interrupted me and every man on his onward and upward path, on which he had trusted soon to leave Court street far behind. What right had it to remind me of Court street? I have found that hollow which even I had relied on for solid.

I am surprised to see men going about their business as if nothing had happened. I say to myself—Unfortunates! they have not heard the news. I am surprised that the man whom I just met on horseback should be so earnest to overtake his newly-bought cows running away—since all property is insecure—and if they do not run away again, they may be taken away from him when he gets them. Fool! does he not know that his seed-corn is worth less this year—that all beneficent harvests fail as you approach the empire of hell? No prudent man will build a store-house under these circumstances, or engage in any peaceful enterprise which requires a long time to accomplish. Art is as long as ever, but life is more interrupted and less available for a man's proper pursuits. It is not an era of repose. We have used up all our inherited freedom. If we would save our lives, we must fight for them.

I walk toward one of our ponds, but what signifies the beauty

of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them, when we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are without principle? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her.

But it chanced the other day that I secured a white water-lily, and a season I had waited for had arrived. It is the emblem of purity. It bursts up so pure and fair to the eye, and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of this flower! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of Northern men. It suggests what kind of laws have prevailed longest and widest, and still prevail, and that the time may come when man's deeds may smell as sweet. Such is the odor which the plant emits. If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still young and full of vigor, her integrity and genius unimpaired, and that there is virtue even in man, too, who is fitted to perceive and love it. It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri Compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the water-lily. It is not a *Nymphaea Douglassii*. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent, are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts Governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that when we behold or scent a flower, we may not be reminded how inconsistent your deeds are with it, for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality, and if fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man, the decay of humanity, the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which are immortal.

Slavery and servility have produced no sweet-scented flower annually, to charm the senses of men, for they have no real life they are merely a decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils We do not complain that they *live*, but that they do not *get buried* Let the living bury them, even they are good for manure

A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

I trust that you will pardon me for being here ²²⁹ I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you, but I feel forced myself Little as I know of Captain Brown, I would fain do my part to correct the tone and the statements of the newspapers, and of my countrymen generally, respecting his character and actions It costs us nothing to be just We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration of, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do

First, as to his history I will endeavor to omit, as much as possible, what you have already read I need not describe his person to you, for probably most of you have seen and will not soon forget him I am told that his grandfather, John Brown, was an officer in the Revolution, that he himself was born in Connecticut about the beginning of this century, but early went with his father to Ohio I heard him say that his father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there, in the war of 1812, that he accompanied him to the camp, and assisted him in that employment, seeing a good deal of military life, more, perhaps, than if he had been a soldier, for he was often present at the councils of the officers Especially, he learned by experience how armies are supplied and maintained in the field—a work which, he observed, requires at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with a military life, indeed, to excite in him a great abhorrence of it, so much so, that though he was tempted by the offer of some petty office in the army, when he was about eighteen, he not only declined that, but he also refused to train when warned, and was fined for it He then resolved that he would never have any thing to do with any war, unless it were a war for liberty

When the troubles in Kansas began, he sent several of his

sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had, telling them that if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of him, he would follow to assist them with his hand and counsel. This, as you all know, he soon after did, and it was through his agency, far more than any other's, that Kansas was made free.

For a part of his life he was a surveyor, and at one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and he went to Europe as an agent about that business. There, as every where, he had his eyes about him, and made many original observations. He said, for instance, that he saw why the soil of England was so rich, and that of Germany (I think it was) so poor, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry live on the soil which they cultivate, but in Germany they are gathered into villages, at night. It is a pity that he did not make a book of his observations.

I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in his respect for the Constitution, and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he deemed to be wholly opposed to these, and he was its determined foe.

He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common sense, deliberate and practical as that class is, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at Concord Bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher principled than any that I have chanced to hear of as there. It was no abolition lecturer that converted him. Ethan Allen and Stark, with whom he may in some respects be compared, were rangers in a lower and less important field. They could bravely face their country's foes, but he had the courage to face his country herself, when she was in the wrong. A Western writer says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a "rural exterior," as if, in that prairie land, a hero should, by good rights, wear a citizen's dress only.

He did not go to the college called Harvard, good old Alma Mater as she is. He was not fed on the pap that is there fur-

nished As he phrased it, "I know no more of grammar than one of your calves " But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness, and having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the public practice of Humanity in Kansas, as you all know Such were *his humanities*, and not any study of grammar He would have left a Greek accent slanting the wrong way, and righted up a falling man

He was one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all—the Puritans It would be in vain to kill him He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day, and eat parched corn in remembrance of that time They were neither Democrats nor Republicans, but men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful, not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, nor seeking after available candidates

"In his camp," as one has recently written, and as I have myself heard him state, "he permitted no profanity, no man of loose morals was suffered to remain there, unless, indeed, as a prisoner of war 'I would rather,' said he, 'have the small-pox, yellow fever, and cholera, all together in my camp, than a man without principle * * * It is a mistake, sir, that our people make, when they think that bullies are the best fighters, or that they are the fit men to oppose these Southerners Give me men of good principles,—God-fearing men,—men who respect themselves, and with a dozen of them I will oppose any hundred such men as these Buford ruffians '" He said that if one offered himself to be a soldier under him, who was forward to tell what he could or would do, if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him

He was never able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only about a dozen, among them his sons, in whom he had perfect faith When he was here,

some years ago, he showed to a few a little manuscript book,—his “orderly book” I think he called it,—containing the names of his company in Kansas, and the rules by which they bound themselves, and he stated that several of them had already sealed the contract with their blood. When some one remarked that, with the addition of a chaplain, it would have been a perfect Cromwellian troop, he observed that he would have been glad to add a chaplain to the list, if he could have found one who could fill that office worthily. It is easy enough to find one for the United States army. I believe that he had prayers in his camp morning and evening, nevertheless.

He was a man of Spartan habits, and at sixty was scrupulous about his diet at your table, excusing himself by saying that he must eat sparingly and fare hard, as became a soldier or one who was fitting himself for difficult enterprises, a life of exposure.

A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action, a transcendentalist²³⁰ above all, a man of ideas and principles,—that was what distinguished him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life. I noticed that he did not overstate any thing, but spoke within bounds. I remember, particularly, how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, without ever giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier, keeping a reserve of force and meaning, “They had a perfect right to be hung.” He was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents any where, had no need to invent any thing, but to tell the simple truth, and communicate his own resolution, therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress and elsewhere seemed to me at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king.

As for his tact and prudence, I will merely say, that at a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without having his arms

taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect guns and other weapons he could collect, openly and slowly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, apparently in the capacity of a surveyor, with his surveying compass exposed in it, and so passed unsuspected, and had ample opportunity to learn the designs of the enemy. For some time after his arrival he still followed the same profession. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic which then occupied their minds, he would perhaps, take his compass and one of his sons, and proceed to run an imaginary line right through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and when he came up to them, he would naturally pause and have some talk with them, learning their news, and, at last, all their plans perfectly, and having thus completed his real survey, he would resume his imaginary one, and run on his line till he was out of sight.

When I expressed surprise that he could live in Kansas at all, with a price set upon his head, and so large a number, including the authorities, exasperated against him, he accounted for it by saying, "It is perfectly well understood that I will not be taken." Much of the time for some years he has had to skulk in swamps, suffering from poverty and from sickness, which was the consequence of exposure, befriended only by Indians and a few whites. But though it might be known that he was lurking in a particular swamp, his foes commonly did not care to go in after him. He could even come out into a town where there were more Border Ruffians than Free State men, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet not be molested, for said he, "No little handful of men were willing to undertake it, and a large body could not be got together in season."

As for his recent failure, we do not know the facts about it. It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate attempt. His enemy, Mr. Vallandigham, is compelled to say, that "it was among the best planned and executed conspiracies that ever failed."

Not to mention his other successes, was it a failure, or did

it show a want of good management, to deliver from bondage a dozen human beings, and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court room on his way and telling what he had done, thus convincing Missouri that it was not profitable to try to hold slaves in his neighborhood?—and this, not because the government menials were lenient, but because they were afraid of him

Yet he did not attribute his success, foolishly, to “his star,” or to any magic. He said, truly, that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him, was, as one of his prisoners confessed, because they *lacked a cause*—a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked. When the time came, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defence of what they knew to be wrong, they did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

But to make haste to *his* last act, and its effects

The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps are really ignorant of the fact, that there are at least as many as two or three individuals to a town throughout the North, who think much as the present speaker does about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to say that they are an important and growing party. We aspire to be something more than stupid and timid chattels, pretending to read history and our Bibles, but desecrating every house and every day we breathe in. Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned in the late enterprise, but their very anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? They are so anxious because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least a million of the free inhabitants of the United States would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics. Though we wear no crape, the thought of that man’s position and probable fate is spoiling many a man’s day here at the North for other thinking. If any one who has seen him here can pursue success-

fully any other train of thought, I do not know what he is made of. If there is any such who gets his usual allowance of sleep, I will warrant him to fatten easily under any circumstances which do not touch his body or purse. I put a piece of paper and a pencil under my pillow, and when I could not sleep, I wrote in the dark.

On the whole, my respect for my fellow-men, except as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual "pluck,"—as the Governor of Virginia is reported to have said, using the language of the cock-pit, "the gamest man he ever saw,"—had been caught, and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming of his foes when the governor thought he looked so brave. It turns what sweetness I have to gall, to hear, or hear of, the remarks of some of my neighbors. When we heard at first that he was dead, one of my townsmen observed that "he died as the fool dieth," which, pardon me, for an instant suggested a likeness in him dying to my neighbor living. Others, craven-hearted, said disparagingly, that "he threw his life away," because he resisted the government. Which way have they thrown *their* lives, pray?—Such as would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. I hear another ask, Yankee-like, "What will he gain by it?" as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise. Such a one has no idea of gain but in this worldly sense. If it does not lead to a "surprise" party, if he does not get a new pair of boots, or a vote of thanks, it must be a failure. "But he won't gain any thing by it." Well, no, I don't suppose he could get four-and-sixpence a day for being hung, take the year round, but then he stands a chance to save a considerable part of his soul—and *such* a soul!—when *you* do not. No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.

Such do not know that like the seed is the fruit, and that, in the moral world, when good seed is planted, good fruit is

inevitable, and does not depend on our watering and cultivating, that when you plant, or bury, a hero in his field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up. This is a seed of such force and vitality, that it does not ask our leave to germinate.

The momentary charge at Balaclava, in obedience to a blundering command, proving what a perfect machine the soldier is, has, properly enough, been celebrated by a poet laureate, but the steady, and for the most part successful charge of this man, for some years, against the legions of Slavery, in obedience to an infinitely higher command, is as much more memorable than that, as an intelligent and conscientious man is superior to a machine. Do you think that that will go unsung?

"Served him right"—"A dangerous man"—"He is undoubtedly insane." So they proceed to live their sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little, but chiefly pausing at that feat of Putnam, who was let down into a wolf's den, and in this wise they nourish themselves for brave and patriotic deeds some time or other. The Tract Society could afford to print that story of Putnam. You might open the district schools with the reading of it, for there is nothing about Slavery or the Church in it, unless it occurs to the reader that some pastors are *wolves* in sheep's clothing. "The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" even, might dare to protest against *that* wolf. I have heard of boards, and of American boards, but it chances that I never heard of this particular lumber till lately. And yet I hear of Northern men, women, and children, by families, buying a "life membership" in such societies as these,—a life-membership in the grave! You can get buried cheaper than that.

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. There is hardly a house but is divided against itself, for our foe is the all but universal woodenness of both head and heart, and want of vitality in man, which is the effect of our vice, and hence are begotten fear, superstition, bigotry, persecution, and slavery of all kinds. We are mere figure-heads upon a hulk, with livers in the place of hearts. The curse is the worship of idols, which

at length changes the worshipper into a stone image himself, and the New Englander is just as much an idolater as the Hindoo. This man was an exception, for he did not set up even a political graven image between him and his God.

A church that can never have done with excommunicating Christ while it exists! Away with your broad and flat churches, and your narrow and tall churches! Take a step forward, and invent a new style of out-houses. Invent a salt that will save you, and defend our nostrils.

The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he is forever looking forward to the time when he shall go to his "*long rest*." He has consented to perform certain old established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does not wish to hear of any new-fangled ones, he doesn't wish to have any supplementary articles added to the contract, to fit it to the present time. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week. The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a stagnation of spirit. Many, no doubt, are well disposed, but sluggish by constitution and by habit, and they cannot conceive of a man who is actuated by higher motives than they are. Accordingly they pronounce this man insane, for they know that *they* could never act as he does, as long as they were themselves.

We dream of foreign countries, of other times and races of men, placing them at a distance in history or space, but let some significant event like the present occur in our midst, and we discover, often, this distance and this strangeness between us and our nearest neighbors. *They* are our Austrias, and Chinas, and South Sea Islands. Our crowded society becomes well spaced all at once, clean and handsome to the eye, a city of magnificent distances. We discover why it was that we never got beyond compliments and surfaces with them before, we become aware of as many versts between us and them as there are between a wandering Tartar and a Chinese town. The

thoughtful man becomes a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place. Impassable seas suddenly find their level between us, or dumb steppes stretch themselves out there. It is the difference of constitution, of intelligence, and faith, and not streams and mountains, that make the true and impassable boundaries between individuals and between states. None but the like-minded can come plenipotentiary to our court.

I read all the newspapers I could get within a week after this event, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men. I have since seen one noble statement, in a Boston paper, not editorial. Some voluminous sheets decided not to print the full report of Brown's words to the exclusion of other matter. It was as if a publisher should reject the manuscript of the New Testament, and print Wilson's last speech. The same journal which contained this pregnant news, was chiefly filled, in parallel columns, with the reports of the political conventions that were being held. But the descent to them was too steep. They should have been spared this contrast, been printed in an extra at least. To turn from the voices and deeds of earnest men to the *cackling* of political conventions! Office-seekers and speech-makers, who do not so much as lay an honest egg, but wear their breasts bare upon an egg of chalk! Their great game is the game of straws, or rather that universal aboriginal game of the platter, at which the Indians cried *hub, bub!* Exclude the reports of religious and political conventions, and publish the words of a living man.

But I object not so much to what they have omitted, as to what they have inserted. Even the *Liberator* called it "a misguided, wild, and apparently insane—effort." As for the herd of newspapers and magazines, I do not chance to know an editor in the country who will deliberately print any thing which he knows will ultimately and permanently reduce the number of his subscribers. They do not believe that it would be expedient. How then can they print truth? If we do not say pleasant things, they argue, nobody will attend to us. And so they do like some travelling auctioneers, who sing an obscene song in order to draw a crowd around them. Republican

editors, obliged to get their sentences ready for the morning edition, and accustomed to look at every thing by the twilight of politics, express no admiration, nor true sorrow even, but call these men "deluded fanatics"—"mistaken men"—"insane," or "crazed." It suggests what a *sane* set of editors we are blessed with, *not* "mistaken men", who know very well on which side their bread is buttered, at least

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring, "I didn't do it, nor countenance *him* to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't be fairly inferred from my past career." I, for one, am not interested to hear you define your position. I don't know that I ever was, or ever shall be. I think it is mere egotism, or impertinent at this time. Ye needn't take so much pains to wash your skirts of him. No intelligent man will ever be convinced that he was any creature of yours. He went and came, as he himself informs us, "under the auspices of John Brown and nobody else." The Republican party does not perceive how many his *failure* will make to vote more correctly than they would have them. They have counted the votes of Pennsylvania & Co., but they have not correctly counted Captain Brown's vote. He has taken the wind out of their sails, the little wind they had, and they may as well lie to and repair.

What though he did not belong to your clique? Though you may not approve of his method or his principles, recognize his magnanimity. Would you not like to claim kindredship with him in that, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you? Do you think that you would lose your reputation so? What you lost at the spile, you would gain at the bung.

If they do not mean all this, then they do not speak the truth, and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

"It was always conceded to him," says one who calls him *crazy*, "that he was a conscientious man, very modest in his demeanor, apparently inoffensive, until the subject of Slavery was introduced, when he would exhibit a feeling of indignation unparalleled."

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying victims, new cargoes are being added in mid ocean, a small crew of slaveholders, countenanced by a large body of passengers, is smothering four millions under the hatches, and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained, is by "the quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity," without any "outbreak." As if the sentiments of humanity were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds, and you could disperse them, all finished to order, the pure article, as easily as water with a watering-pot, and so lay the dust. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead that have found deliverance. That is the way we are "diffusing" humanity, and its sentiments with it.

Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted "on the principle of revenge." They do not know the man. They must enlarge themselves to conceive of him. I have no doubt that the time will come when they will begin to see him as he was. They have got to conceive of a man of faith and of religious principle, and not a politician nor an Indian, of a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed.

If Walker may be considered the representative of the South, I wish I could say that Brown was the representative of the North. He was a superior man. He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things. He did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them as he was bid. For once we are lifted out of the trivialness and dust of politics into the region of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature, knowing himself for a man, and the equal of any and all governments. In that sense he was the most American of us all. He needed no babbling lawyer, making false issues, to defend him. He was more than a match for all the judges that American voters, or office-holders of whatever grade, can create. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers,

because his peers did not exist When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally *by a whole body*,—even though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself,—the spectacle is a sublime one,—didn't ye know it, ye Liberators, ye Tribunes, ye Republicans²—and we become criminal in comparison Do yourselves the honor to recognize him He needs none of your respect

As for the Democratic journals, they are not human enough to affect me at all I do not feel indignation at any thing they may say

I am aware that I anticipate a little, that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes,²³¹ but that being the case, I have all along found myself thinking and speaking of him as physically dead

I do not believe in erecting statues to those who still live in our hearts, whose bones have not yet crumbled in the earth around us, but I would rather see the statue of Captain Brown in the Massachusetts State-House yard, than that of any other man whom I know I rejoice that I live in this age—that I am his contemporary

What a contrast, when we turn to that political party which is so anxiously shuffling him and his plot out of its way, and looking around for some available slaveholder, perhaps, to be its candidate, at least for one who will execute the Fugitive Slave Law, and all those other unjust laws which he took up arms to annul!

Insane! A father and six sons,²³² and one son-in-law, and several more men besides,—as many at least as twelve disciples,—all struck with insanity at once, while the sane tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors, his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Just as insane were his efforts in Kansas Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane Do the thousands who know him best, who have rejoiced at his deeds in Kansas, and have afforded him material aid there, think him insane² Such a use of this word is a mere

trope with most who persist in using it, and I have no doubt that many of the rest have already in silence retracted their words

Read his admirable answers to Mason and others. How they are dwarfed and defeated by the contrast! On the one side, half brutish, half timid questioning, on the other, truth, clear as lightning, crashing into their obscene temples. They are made to stand with Pilate, and Gesler, and the Inquisition. How ineffectual their speech and action! and what a void their silence! They are but helpless tools in this great work. It was no human power that gathered them about this preacher.

What have Massachusetts and the North sent a few *sane* representatives to Congress for, of late years?—to declare with effect what kind of sentiments? All their speeches put together and boiled down,—and probably they themselves will confess it,—do not match for manly directness and force, and for simple truth, the few casual remarks of crazy John Brown, on the floor of the Harper's Ferry engine house,—that man whom you are about to hang, to send to the other world, though not to represent *you* there. No, he was not our representative in any sense. He was too fair a specimen of a man to represent the like of us. Who, then, *were* his constituents? If you read his words understandingly you will find out. In his case there is no idle eloquence, no made, nor maiden speech, no compliments to the oppressor. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness the polisher of his sentences. He could afford to lose his Sharpe's rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, a Sharpe's rifle of infinitely surer and longer range.

And the *New York Herald* reports the conversation "*verbatim*"! It does not know of what undying words it is made the vehicle.

I have no respect for the penetration of any man who can read the report of that conversation, and still call the principal in it insane. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secure. Take any sentence of it—"Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will, not otherwise. So far as I am myself

concerned, I have told every thing truthfully I value my word, sir " The few who talk about his vindictive spirit, while they really admire his heroism, have no test by which to detect a noble man, no amalgam to combine with his pure gold They mix their own dross with it

It is a relief to turn from these slanders to the testimony of his more truthful, but frightened, jailers and hangmen Governor Wise speaks far more justly and appreciatingly of him than any Northern editor, or politician, or public personage, that I chance to have heard from I know that you can afford to hear him again on this subject He says "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say, that he was humane to his prisoners And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous," (I leave that part to Mr Wise,) "but firm, truthful, and intelligent His men, too, who survive, are like him Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stephens, and Coppie, it was hard to say which was most firm "

Almost the first Northern men whom the slaveholder has learned to respect!

The testimony of Mr Vallandigham, though less valuable, is of the same purport, that "it is vain to underrate either the man or his conspiracy He is the farthest possible remove from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic, or madman "

"All is quiet at Harper's Ferry," say the journals What is the character of that calm which follows when the law and the slaveholder prevail? I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out, with glaring distinctness, the character of this government. We needed to be thus assisted to see it by the light of history It needed to see itself When a government

puts forth its strength on the side of injustice, as ours to maintain Slavery and kill the liberators of the slave, it reveals itself a merely brute force, or worse, a demoniacal force. It is the head of the Plug Uglies. It is more manifest than ever that tyranny rules. I see this government to be effectually allied with France and Austria in oppressing mankind. There sits a tyrant holding fettered four millions of slaves, here comes their heroic liberator. This most hypocritical and diabolical government looks up from its seat on the gasping four millions, and inquires with an assumption of innocence, "What do you assault me for? Am I not an honest man? Cease agitation on this subject, or I will make a slave of you, too, or else hang you."

We talk about a *representative* government, but what a monster of a government is that where the noblest faculties of the mind, and the *whole* heart, are not *represented*. A semi-human tiger or ox, stalking over the earth, with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away. Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by such a government as that.

The only government that I recognize,—and it matters not how few are at the head of it, or how small its army,—is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice. What shall we think of a government to which all the truly brave and just men in the land are enemies, standing between it and those whom it oppresses? A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Treason! Where does such treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought? High treason, when it is resistance to tyranny here below, has its origin in, and is first committed by the power that makes and forever recreates man. When you have caught and hung all these human rebels, you have accomplished nothing but your own guilt, for you have not struck at the fountain head. You presume to contend with a foe against whom West Point cadets and rifled cannon *point* not. Can all the art of the cannon-founder tempt matter

to turn against its maker? Is the form in which the founder thinks he casts it more essential than the constitution of it and of himself?

The United States have a coffer of four millions of slaves. They are determined to keep them in this condition, and Massachusetts is one of the confederated overseers to prevent their escape. Such are not all the inhabitants of Massachusetts, but such are they who rule and are obeyed here. It was Massachusetts, as well as Virginia, that put down this insurrection at Harper's Ferry. She sent the marines there, and she will have to pay the penalty of her sin.

Suppose that there is a society in this State that out of its own purse and magnanimity saves all the fugitive slaves that run to us, and protects our colored fellow-citizens, and leaves the other work to the Government, so-called. Is not that government fast losing its occupation, and becoming contemptible to mankind? If private men are obliged to perform the offices of government, to protect the weak and dispense justice, then the government becomes only a hired man, or clerk, to perform menial or indifferent services. Of course, that is but the shadow of a government whose existence necessitates a Vigilant Committee. What should we think of the oriental Cadi even, behind whom worked in secret a vigilant committee? But such is the character of our Northern States generally, each has its Vigilant Committee. And, to a certain extent, these crazy governments recognize and accept this relation. They say, virtually, "We'll be glad to work for you on these terms, only don't make a noise about it." And thus the government, its salary being insured, withdraws into the back shop, taking the constitution with it, and bestows most of its labor on repairing that. When I hear it at work sometimes, as I go by, it reminds me, at best, of those farmers who in winter contrive to turn a penny by following the coopering business. And what kind of spirit is their barrel made to hold? They speculate in stocks, and bore holes in mountains, but they are not competent to lay out even a decent highway. The only *free* road, the Underground Railroad, is owned and managed by the Vigilant

Committee *They* have tunnelled under the whole breadth of the land. Such a government is losing its power and respectability as surely as water runs out of a leaky vessel, and is held by one that can contain it.

I hear many condemn these men because they were so few. When were the good and the brave ever in a majority? Would you have had him wait till that time came?—till you and I came over to him? The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him, would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was a picked man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions, apparently a man of principle, of rare courage and devoted humanity, ready to sacrifice his life at any moment for the benefit of his fellow-man. It may be doubted if there were as many more their equals in these respects in all the country—I speak of his followers only—for their leader, no doubt, scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment which this country could pay them. They were ripe for her gallows. She has tried a long time, she has hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

When I think of him, and his six sons, and his son-in-law,—not to enumerate the others,—enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, for months, if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, I say again, that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. If he had had any journal advocating "*his cause*," any organ, as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing the same old tune, and then passing round the hat, it would have been fatal to his efficiency. If he had acted in any way so as to be let alone by the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to

the tyrant, that distinguished him from all the reformers of the day that I know

It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave I agree with him They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death I shall not be forward to think him mistaken in his method who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave I speak for the slave when I say, that I prefer the philanthropy of Captain Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me At any rate, I do not think it is quite sane for one to spend his whole life in talking or writing about this matter, unless he is continuously inspired, and I have not done so A man may have other affairs to attend to I do not wish to kill nor to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both these things would be by me unavoidable We preserve the so-called peace of our community by deeds of petty violence every day Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of *this* provisional army So we defend ourselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery I know that the mass of my countrymen think that the only righteous use that can be made of Sharpe's rifles and revolvers is to fight duels with them, when we are insulted by other nations, or to hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them, or the like I think that for once the Sharpe's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause The tools were in the hands of one who could use them

The same indignation that is said to have cleared the temple once will clear it again The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it No man has appeared in America, as yet, who loved his fellow-man so well, and treated him so tenderly He lived for him He took up his life and he laid it down for him What sort of violence is that which is encouraged, not by soldiers but by peaceable

citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by the Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as by Quaker women²

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death—the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America before, for in order to die you must first have lived. I don't believe in the hearses, and palls, and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life, they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple's veil was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. Let the dead bury their dead. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. Franklin—Washington—they were let off without dying, they were merely missing one day. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die, or that they have died, for aught that I know. Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They haven't got life enough in them. They'll deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. Do you think that you are going to die, sir? No! there's no hope of you. You haven't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school. We make a needless ado about capital punishment—taking lives, when there is no life to take. *Memento mori!* We don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. We've interpreted it in a groveling and snivelling sense, we've wholly forgotten how to die.

But be sure you do die, nevertheless. Do your work, and finish it. If you know how to begin, you will know when to end.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man's acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words that do. It is the best news that America has ever heard. It has already quickened the feeble pulse of the North, and infused more and more generous blood into her veins and heart, than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

One writer says that Brown's peculiar monomania made him to be "dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being" Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded He is just that thing He shows himself superior to nature He has a spark of divinity in him

"Unless above himself he doth erect himself,
How poor a thing is man!"

Newspaper editors argue also that it is a proof of his *insanity* that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did—that he did not suspect himself for a moment! They talk as if it were impossible that a man could be "divinely appointed" in these days to do any work whatever, as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man's daily work,—as if the agent to abolish Slavery could only be somebody appointed by the President, or by some political party They talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder

The amount of it is, our "*leading men*" are a harmless kind of folk, and they know *well enough* that *they* were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party

Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? Is there no resource but to cast these men also to the Minotaur? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly While these things are being done, beauty stands veiled and music is a screeching lie Think of him—of his rare qualities! such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand, no mock hero, nor the representative of any party A man such as the sun may not rise upon again in this benighted land To whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant, sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity,

and the only use to which you can put him is to hang him at the end of a rope¹ You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the saviour of four millions of men

Any man knows when he is justified, and all the wits in the world cannot enlighten him on that point The murderer always knows that he is justly punished, but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step towards its own dissolution Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong² Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made³ or declared by any number of men to be good, if they are *not* good³ Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which his better nature disapproves³ Is it the intention of law-makers that *good* men shall be hung ever³ Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit³ What right have *you* to enter into a compact with yourself that you *will* do thus or so, against the light within you³ Is it for *you* to *make up* your mind—to form any resolution whatever—and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which ever pass your understanding³ I do not believe in lawyers, in that mode of attacking or defending a man, because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not Let lawyers decide trivial cases Business men may arrange that among themselves If they were the interpreters of the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in a free¹ What kind of laws for free men can you expect from that²

I am here to plead his cause with you I plead not for his life, but for his character—his immortal life, and so it becomes your cause wholly, and is not his in the least Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified, this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung These are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links He is not Old Brown any longer, he is an angel of light

I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung Perhaps he saw it himself I *almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if *any* life, can do as much good as his death

"Misguided"! "Garrulous"! "Insane"! "Vindictive"! So ye write in your easy chairs, and thus he wounded responds from the floor of the Armory, clear as a cloudless sky, true as the voice of nature is "No man sent me here, it was my own prompting and that of my Maker I acknowledge no master in human form "

And in what a sweet and noble strain he proceeds, addressing his captors, who stand over him "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity, and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you so far as to free those you wilfully and wickedly hold in bondage "

And referring to his movement "It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to God "

"I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them, that is why I am here, not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God "

You don't know your testament when you see it

"I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave power, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful "

"I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better, all you people at the South, prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it The sooner you are prepared the better You may dispose of me very easily I am nearly disposed of now, but this question is still to be settled—this negro question, I mean, the end of that is not yet "

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, no longer going to Rome for a subject, the poet will sing it; the

historian record it, and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the Declaration of Independence, it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when at least the present form of Slavery shall be no more here. We shall then be at liberty to weep for Captain Brown. Then, and not till then, we will take our revenge.

WALKING ²³³

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil, —to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilisation the minister, and the school-committee, and every one of you will take care of that

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understand the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, —who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering* which word is beautifully derived “from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*,” to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, “There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*,” a Saunterer,—a Holy-Lander They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds, but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean Some, however, would derive the word from *sans terre*, without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere For this is the secret of successful sauntering He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all, but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearth-side from which we set out Half the

walk is but retracing our steps We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return,—prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again,—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk

To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order,—not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Rutters or Riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker,—not the Knight, but Walker Errant He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People

We have felt that we almost alone hereabouts practised this noble art, though, to tell the truth, at least if their own assertions are to be received, most of my townsmen would fain walk sometimes, as I do, but they cannot No wealth can buy the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence, which are the capital in this profession It comes only by the grace of God It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker You must be born into the family of the Walkers. *Ambulator nascitur, non fit* Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half-an-hour in the woods, but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretensions they may make to belong to this select class No doubt they were elevated for a moment as by the reminiscence of a previous state of existence, when even they were foresters and outlaws

“When he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,

There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge

"It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here,
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere "

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them,—as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon,—I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago.

I, who cannot stay in my chamber for a single day without acquiring some rust, and when sometimes I have stolen forth for a walk at the eleventh hour of four o'clock in the afternoon, too late to redeem the day, when the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight, have felt as if I had committed some sin to be atoned for,—I confess that I am astonished at the power of endurance, to say nothing of the moral insensibility, of my neighbors who confine themselves to shops and offices the whole day for weeks and months, ay, and years almost together. I know not what manner of stuff they are of,—sitting there now at three o'clock in the afternoon, as if it were three o'clock in the morning. Bonaparte may talk of the three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, but it is nothing to the courage which can sit down cheerfully at this hour in the afternoon over against one's self whom you have known all the morning, to starve out a garrison to whom you are bound by such strong ties of sympathy. I wonder that about this time, or say between four and five o'clock in the afternoon,

too late for the morning papers and too early for the evening ones, there is not a general explosion heard up and down the street, scattering a legion of antiquated and house-bred notions and whims to the four winds for an airing,—and so the evil cure itself

How womankind, who are confined to the house still more than men, stand it I do not know, but I have ground to suspect that most of them do not *stand* it at all. When, early in a summer afternoon, we have been shaking the dust of the village from the skirts of our garments, making haste past those houses with purely Doric or Gothic fronts, which have such an air of repose about them, my companion whispers that probably about these times their occupants are all gone to bed. Then it is that I appreciate the beauty and the glory of architecture, which itself never turns in, but forever stands out and erect, keeping watch over the slumberers

No doubt temperament, and, above all, age, have a good deal to do with it. As a man grows older, his ability to sit still and follow indoor occupations increases. He grows vespertinal in his habits as the evening of life approaches, till at last he comes forth only just before sundown, and gets all the walk that he requires in half-an-hour.

But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours,—as the swinging of dumb-bells or chairs, but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day. If you would get exercise, go in search of the springs of life. Think of a man's swinging dumb-bells for his health, when those springs are bubbling up in far-off pastures unsought by him!

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveller asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character,—will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labour robs the hands

of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less, and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough,—that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the labourer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of *Platanes*," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head, and I am not where my body is,—I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder, when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works,—for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks, and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for

several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Nowadays almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses, and the cutting down of the forest and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more and more tame and cheap. A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels going to and fro, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again, and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy, stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found his bounds without a doubt, three little stones, where a stake had been driven, and looking nearer, I saw that the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor.

I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do first along by the river, and then the brook, and then the meadow and the wood-side. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant. From many a hill I can see civilisation and the abodes of man afar. The farmers and their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks and their burrows. Man and his affairs, church and state and school, trade and commerce, and manufactures and agriculture, even politics, the most alarming of them all,—I am pleased to see how little space they occupy in the landscape. Politics is but a narrow field, and that still narrower highway yonder leads to it. I sometimes direct

the traveller thither If you would go to the political world, follow the great road,—follow that market-man, keep his dust in your eyes, and it will lead you straight to it, for it, too, has its place merely, and does not occupy all space I pass from it as from a bean-field into the forest, and it is forgotten In one half-hour I can walk off to some portion of the earth's surface where a man does not stand from one year's end to another, and there, consequently, politics are not, for they are but as the cigar-smoke of a man

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a lake of a river It is the body of which roads are the arms and legs,—a trivial or quadrivial place, the thoroughfare and ordinary of travellers The word is from the Latin *villa*, which, together with *via*, a way, or more anciently *ved* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho*, to carry, because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried They who get their living by teaming were said *vellaturam facere* Hence, too, apparently, the Latin word *vilis* and our vile, also *villain* This suggests what kind of degeneracy villagers are liable to They are wayworn by the travel that goes by and over them, without travelling themselves

Some do not walk at all, others walk in the highways, a few walk across lots Roads are made for horses and men of business I do not travel in them much, comparatively, because I am not in a hurry to get to any tavern or grocery or livery-stable or depot to which they lead I am a good horse to travel, but not from choice a roadster The landscape-painter uses the figures of men to mark a road He would not make that use of my figure I walk out into a Nature such as the old prophets and poets, Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in You may name it America, but it is not America neither Americus Vespucius, nor Columbus, nor the rest were the discoverers of it There is a truer account of it in mythology than in any history of America, so called, that I have seen

However, there are a few old roads that may be trodden with profit, as if they led somewhere now that they are nearly discontinued There is the Old Marlborough Road, which does

not go to Marlborough now, methinks, unless that is Marlborough where it carries me I am the bolder to speak of it here, because I presume that there are one or two such roads in every town

THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

Where they once dug for money,
But never found any,
Where sometimes Martial Miles
Singly files,
And Elijah Wood,
I fear for no good
No other man,
Save Elisha Dugan,—
O man of wild habits,
Partridges and rabbits,
Who hast no cares
Only to set snares,
Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,
And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest
When the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it,
It is a living way,
As the Christians say
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,

And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere²
Great guide-boards of stone,
But travellers none,
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering,
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby³
They're a great endeavor
To be something forever,
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known,
Which another might read,
In his extreme need
I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing
If with fancy unfurled
You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not

private property, the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only, —when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the *public* road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk? I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way, but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world, and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle,—varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun.

I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for the thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force, but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither, but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia, but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Tibet. "The world ends there," say they, "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

We go eastward to realise history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race, we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a Lethæan stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions. If we do not succeed this time, there is perhaps one more chance for the race left before it arrives on the banks of the Styx, and that is in the Lethe of the Pacific, which is three times as wide.

I know not how significant it is, or how far it is an evidence of singularity, that an individual should thus consent in his pettiest walk with the general movement of the race, but I know

that something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds,—which, in some instances, is known to have affected the squirrel tribe, impelling them to a general and mysterious movement, in which they were seen, say some, crossing the broadest rivers, each on its particular chip, with its tail raised for a sail, and bridging narrower streams with their dead,—that something like the *furor* which affects the domestic cattle in the spring, and which is referred to a worm in their tails,—affects both nations and individuals, either perennially or from time to time. Not a flock of wild geese cackles over our town, but it to some extent unsettles the value of real estate here, and, if I were a broker, I should probably take that disturbance into account.

“Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes”

Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily, and tempts us to follow him. He is the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. We dream all night of those mountain-ridges in the horizon, though they may be of vapor only, which were last gilded by his rays. The island of Atlantis, and the islands and gardens of the Hesperides, a sort of terrestrial paradise, appear to have been the Great West of the ancients, enveloped in mystery and poetry. Who has not seen in imagination, when looking into the sunset sky, the gardens of the Hesperides, and the foundation of all those fables?

Columbus felt the westward tendency more strongly than any before. He obeyed it, and found a New World for Castile and Leon. The herd of men in those days scented fresh pastures from afar.

“And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay,
At last *he* rose, and twitched his mantle blue,
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new”

Where on the globe can there be found an area of equal extent with that occupied by the bulk of our States, so fertile and so rich and varied in its productions, and at the same time so habitable by the European, as this is? Michaux, who knew but part of them, says that "the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe, in the United States there are more than one hundred and forty species that exceed thirty feet in height, in France there are but thirty that attain this size" Later botanists more than confirm his observations Humboldt came to America to realise his youthful dreams of a tropical vegetation, and he beheld it in its greatest perfection in the primitive forests of the Amazon, the most gigantic wilderness on the earth, which he has so eloquently described The geographer Guyot, himself a European, goes farther,—farther than I am ready to follow him, yet not when he says, "As the plant is made for the animal, as the vegetable world is made for the animal world, America is made for the man of the Old World The man of the Old World sets out upon his way Leaving the highlands of Asia, he descends from station to station towards Europe Each of his steps is marked by a new civilisation superior to the preceding, by a greater power of development Arrived at the Atlantic, he pauses on the shore of this unknown ocean, the bounds of which he knows not, and turns upon his footprints for an instant" When he has exhausted the rich soil of Europe, and reinvigorated himself, "then recommences his adventurous career westward as in the earliest ages" So far Guyot

From this western impulse coming in contact with the barrier of the Atlantic sprang the commerce and enterprise of modern times The younger Michaux, in his "Travels West of the Alleghanies in 1802," says that the common inquiry in the newly settled West was, "From what part of the world have you come?" As if these vast and fertile regions would naturally be the place of meeting and common country of all the inhabitants of the globe"

To use an obsolete Latin word, I might say, *Ex Oriente lux, ex Occidente FRUX* From the East light, from the West fruit.

Sir Francis Head, an English traveller and a Governor-General of Canada, tells us that "in both the northern and southern hemispheres of the New World, Nature has not only outlined her works on a larger scale, but has painted the whole picture with brighter and more costly colors than she used in delineating and in beautifying the Old World. The heavens of America appear infinitely higher, the sky is bluer, the air is fresher, the cold is intenser, the moon looks larger, the stars are brighter, the thunder is louder, the lightning is vividder, the wind is stronger, the rain is heavier, the mountains are higher, the rivers longer, the forests bigger, the plains broader." This statement will do at least to set against Buffon's account of this part of the world and its productions.

Linnæus said long ago, "*Nescio quæ facies læta, glabra plantis Americanis*. I know not what there is of joyous and smooth in the aspect of American plants," and I think that in this country there are no, or at most very few, *Africanæ bestiæ*, African beasts, as the Romans called them, and that in this respect also it is peculiarly fitted for the habitation of man. We are told that within three miles of the centre of the East Indian city of Singapore, some of the inhabitants are annually carried off by tigers, but the traveller can lie down in the woods at night almost anywhere in North America without fear of wild beasts.

These are encouraging testimonies. If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man,—as there is something in the mountain-air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imagina-

tive, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal, as our sky,—our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains,—our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests,—and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveller something, he knows not what, of *læta* and *glabra*, of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered?

To Americans I hardly need to say,—

“Westward the star of empire takes its way”

As a true patriot, I should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated on the whole than the backwoodsman in this country.

Our sympathies in Massachusetts are not confined to New England, though we may be estranged from the South, we sympathise with the West. There is the home of the younger sons, as among the Scandinavians they took to the sea for their inheritance. It is too late to be studying Hebrew, it is more important to understand even the slang of to-day.

Some months ago I went to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle Ages. I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination, under bridges built by the Romans, and repaired by later heroes, past cities and castles whose very names were music to my ears, and each of which was the subject of a legend. There were Ehrenbreitstein and Rolandseck and Coblenz, which I knew only in history. They were ruins that interested me chiefly. There seemed to come up from its waters and its vine-clad hills and valleys a hushed music as of Crusaders departing for the Holy Land. I floated along under the spell of enchantment, as if I had been transported to an heroic age, and breathed an atmosphere of chivalry.

Soon after, I went to see a panorama of the Mississippi, and

as I worked my way up the river in the light of to-day, and saw the steamboats wooding up, counted the rising cities, gazed on the fresh ruins of Nauvoo, beheld the Indians moving west across the stream, and, as before I had looked up the Moselle, now looked up the Ohio and the Missouri, and heard the legends of Dubuque and of Wenona's Cliff,—still thinking more of the future than of the past or present,—I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind, that the foundations of castles were yet to be laid, and the famous bridges were yet to be thrown over the river, and I felt that *this was the heroic age itself*, though we know it not, for the hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men

The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild, and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plough and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every State which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the Northern forests who were

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock-spruce or arbor-vitæ in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our Northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and

slaughter-house pork to make a man of Give me a wildness whose glance no civilisation can endure,—as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw

There are some intervals which border the strain of the wood-thrush, to which I would migrate,—wild lands where no settler has squatted, to which, methinks, I am already acclimated

The African hunter Cummings tells us that the skin of the eland, as well as that of most other antelopes just killed, emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of Nature, that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence, and remind us of those parts of Nature which he most haunts I feel no disposition to be satirical, when the trapper's coat emits the odor of musquash even, it is a sweeter scent to me than that which commonly exhales from the merchant's or the scholar's garments When I go into their wardrobes and handle their vestments, I am reminded of no grassy plains and flowery meads which they have frequented, but of dusty merchants' exchanges and libraries rather

A tanned skin is something more than respectable, and perhaps olive is a fitter color than white for a man,—a denizen of the woods "The pale white man!" I do not wonder that the African pitied him Darwin the naturalist says, "A white man bathing by the side of a Tahitian was like a plant bleached by the gardener's art, compared with a fine, dark green one, growing vigorously in the open fields"

Ben Jonson exclaims,—

"How near to good is what is fair!"

So I would say,—

How near to good is what is *wild*!

Life consists with wildness The most alive is the wildest Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors,

who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.

Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. When, formerly, I have analysed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog,—a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village. There are no richer parterres to my eyes than the dense beds of dwarf andromeda (*Cassandra calyculata*) which cover these tender places on the earth's surface. Botany cannot go further than tell me the names of the shrubs which grow there,—the high-blueberry, paniced andromeda, lambkill, azalea, and rhodora,—all standing in the quaking sphagnum. I often think that I should like to have my house front on this mass of dull red bushes, omitting other flower plots and borders, transplanted spruce and trim box, even gravelled walks,—to have this fertile spot under my windows, not a few imported barrow-fulls of soil only to cover the sand which was thrown out in digging the cellar. Why not put my house, my parlor, behind this plot, instead of behind that meagre assemblage of curiosities, that poor apology for a Nature and Art which I call my front-yard? It is an effort to clear up and make a decent appearance when the carpenter and mason have departed, though done as much for the passer-by as the dweller within. The most tasteful front-yard fence was never an agreeable object of study to me, the most elaborate ornaments, acorn-tops, or what not, soon wearied and disgusted me. Bring your sills up to the very edge of the swamp, then (though it may not be the best place for a dry cellar,) so that there be no access on that side to citizens. Front-yards are not made to walk in, but, at most, through, and you could go in the back way.

Yes, though you may think me perverse, if it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else of a dismal swamp, I should certainly decide for the swamp. How vain, then, have been all your labors, citizens, for me!

My spirits infallibly rise in proportion to the outward dreariness. Give me the ocean, the desert or the wilderness! In the desert, pure air and solitude compensate for want of moisture and fertility. The traveller Burton says of it,—“Your *morale* improves, you become frank and cordial, hospitable and single-minded. In the desert, spirituous liquors excite only disgust. There is a keen enjoyment in a mere animal existence.” They who have been travelling long on the steppes of Tartary say,—“On re-entering cultivated lands, the agitation, perplexity, and turmoil of civilisation oppressed and suffocated us, the air seemed to fail us, and we felt every moment as if about to die of asphyxia.” When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable, and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place,—a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin mould,—and the same soil is good for men and for trees. A man’s health requires as many acres of meadow to his prospect as his farm does loads of muck. There are the strong meats on which he feeds. A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below,—such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey.

To preserve wild animals implies generally the creation of a forest for them to dwell in or resort to. So it is with man. A hundred years ago they sold bark in our streets peeled from our own woods. In the very aspect of those primitive and rugged trees, there was, methinks, a tanning principle which hardened and consolidated the fibres of men’s thoughts. Ah!

already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of my native village, when you cannot collect a load of bark of good thickness, and we no longer produce tar and turpentine.

The civilised nations—Greece, Rome, England—have been sustained by the primitive forests which anciently rotted where they stand. They survive as long as the soil is not exhausted. Alas for human culture! little is to be expected of a nation, when the vegetable mould is exhausted, and it is compelled to make manure of the bones of its fathers. There the poet sustains himself merely by his own superfluous fat, and the philosopher comes down on his marrow-bones.

It is said to be the task of the American "to work the virgin soil," and that "agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else." I think that the farmer displaces the Indian even because he redeems the meadow, and so makes himself stronger and in some respects more natural. I was surveying for a man the other day a single straight line one hundred and thirty-two rods long, through a swamp, at whose entrance might have been written the words which Dante read over the entrance to the infernal regions,—"*Leave all hope, ye that enter,*"—that is, of ever getting out again, where at one time I saw my employer actually up to his neck and swimming for his life in his property, though it was still winter. He had another similar swamp which I could not survey at all, because it was completely under water, and nevertheless, with regard to a third swamp, which I did *survey* from a distance, he remarked to me, true to his instincts, that he would not part with it for any consideration, on account of the mud which it contained. And that man intends to put a girdling ditch round the whole in the course of forty months, and so redeem it by the magic of his spade. I refer to him only as the type of a class.

The weapons with which we have gained our most important victories, which should be handed down as heirlooms from father to son, are not the sword and the lance, but the bush-whack, the turf-cutter, the spade, and the bog-hoe, rusted with the blood of many a meadow, and begrimed with the dust of many a hard-fought field. The very winds blew the Indian's

corn-field into the meadow, and pointed out the way which he had not the skill to follow. He had no better implement with which to intrench himself in the land than a clam-shell. But the farmer is armed with plough and spade.

In Literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dulness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilised free and wild thinking in "Hamlet" and the "Iliad," in all the Scriptures and Mythologies, not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild—the mallard—thought, which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East. Genius is a light which makes the darkness visible, like the lightning's flash, which perchance shatters the temple of knowledge itself,—and not a taper lighted at the hearth-stone of the race, which pales before the light of common day.

English literature, from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets,—Chaucer and Spenser and Milton, and even Shakespeare, included,—breathes no quite fresh and in this sense wild strain. It is an essentially tame and civilised literature, reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a green-wood,—her wild man a Robin Hood. There is plenty of genial love of Nature, but not so much of Nature herself. Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her, became extinct.

The science of Humboldt is one thing, poetry is another thing. The poet to-day, notwithstanding all the discoveries of science, and the accumulated learning of mankind, enjoys no advantage over Homer.

Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him, who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved, who derived his words as often as he used them,—transplanted them to his page with earth

adhering to their roots, whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half-smothered between two musty leaves in a library,—ay, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually, for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature

I do not know of any poetry to quote which adequately expresses this yearning for the Wild. Approached from this side, the best poetry is tame. I do not know where to find in any literature, ancient or modern, any account which contents me of that Nature with which even I am acquainted. You will perceive that I demand something which no Augustan nor Elizabethan age, which no *culture*, in short, can give. Mythology comes nearer to it than anything. How much more fertile a Nature, at least, has Grecian mythology its root in than English literature! Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted, before the fancy and imagination were affected with blight, and which it still bears, wherever its pristine vigor is unabated. All other literatures endure only as the elms which overshadow our houses, but this is like the great dragon-tree of the Western Isles, as old as mankind, and, whether that does or not, will endure as long, for the decay of other literatures makes the soil in which it thrives.

The West is preparing to add its fables to those of the East. The valleys of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Rhine, having yielded their crop, it remains to be seen what the valleys of the Amazon, the Plate, the Orinoco, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi will produce. Perchance, when, in the course of ages, American liberty has become a fiction of the past,—as it is to some extent a fiction of the present,—the poets of the world will be inspired by American mythology.

The wildest dreams of wild men, even, are not the less true, though they may not recommend themselves to the sense which is most common among Englishmen and Americans to-day. It is not every truth that recommends itself to the common sense. Nature has a place for the wild clematis as well as for the cabbage. Some expressions of truth are reminiscent,—

others merely *sensible*, as the phrase is,—others prophetic. Some forms of disease, even, may prophesy forms of health. The geologist has discovered that the figures of serpents, griffins, flying dragons, and other fanciful embellishments of heraldry, have their prototypes in the forms of fossil species which were extinct before man was created, and hence “indicate a faint and shadowy knowledge of a previous state of organic existence.” The Hindoos dreamed that the earth rested on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, and though it may be an unimportant coincidence, it will not be out of place here to state, that a fossil tortoise has lately been discovered in Asia large enough to support an elephant. I confess that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development. They are the sublimest recreation of the intellect. The partridge loves peas, but not those that go with her into the pot.

In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice,—take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance,—which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand. Give me for my friends and neighbors wild men, not tame ones. The wildness of the savage is but a faint symbol of the awful fertility with which good men and lovers meet.

I love even to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights,—any evidence that they have not wholly lost their original wild habits and vigor, as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of her pasture early in the spring and boldly swims the river, a cold, grey tide, twenty-five or thirty rods wide, swollen by the melted snow. It is the buffalo crossing the Mississippi. This exploit confers some dignity on the herd in my eyes,—already dignified. The seeds of instinct are preserved under the thick hides of cattle and horses, like seeds in the bowels of the earth, an indefinite period.

Any sportiveness in cattle is unexpected. I saw one day a herd of a dozen bullocks and cows running about and frisking

in unwieldy sport, like huge rats, even like kittens. They shook their heads, raised their tails, and rushed up and down a hill, and I perceived by their horns, as well as by their activity, their relation to the deer tribe. But, alas! a sudden loud *Whoa!* would have damped their ardor at once, reduced them from venison to beef, and stiffened their sides and sinews like the locomotive. Who but the Evil One has cried "*Whoa!*" to mankind? Indeed, the life of cattle, like that of many men, is but a sort of locomotiveness, they move a side at a time, and man, by his machinery, is meeting the horse and the ox half-way. Whatever part the whip has touched is thenceforth palsied. Who would ever think of a *side* of any of the supple cat tribe, as we speak of a *side* of beef?

I rejoice that horses and steers have to be broken before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves have some wild oats still left to sow before they become submissive members of society. Undoubtedly, all men are not equally fit subjects for civilisation, and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, this is no reason why the others should have their natures broken that they may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that they might be various. If a low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well as another, if a high one, individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no other man could serve so rare a use as the author of this illustration did. Confucius says,—"*The skins of the tiger and the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned.*" But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious, and tanning their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put.

When looking over a list of men's names in a foreign language, as of military officers, or of authors who have written on a particular subject, I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name. The name Menschikoff, for instance, has

nothing in it to my ears more human than a whisker, and it may belong to a rat. As the names of the Poles and Russians are to us, so are ours to them. It is as if they had been named by the child's rigmorale—*Iery wery ichery van, tittle-tol-tan*. I see in my mind a herd of wild creatures swarming over the earth, and to each the herdsman has affixed some barbarous sound in his own dialect. The names of men are of course as cheap and meaningless as *Bose* and *Tray*, the names of dogs.

Methinks it would be some advantage to philosophy if men were named merely in the gross, as they are known. It would be necessary only to know the genus, and perhaps the race or variety, to know the individual. We are not prepared to believe that every private soldier in a Roman army had a name of his own,—because we have not supposed that he had a character of his own. At present our only true names are nicknames. I knew a boy who, from his peculiar energy, was called "Buster" by his playmates, and this rightly supplanted his Christian name. Some travellers tell us that an Indian had no name given him at first, but earned it, and his name was his fame, and among some tribes he acquired a new name with every new exploit. It is pitiful when a man bears a name for convenience merely, who has earned neither name nor fame.

I will not allow mere names to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds for all them. A familiar name cannot make a man less strange to me. It may be given to a savage who retains in secret his own wild title earned in the woods. We have a wild savage in us, and a savage name is perchance somewhere recorded as ours. I see that my neighbor, who bears the familiar epithet William, or Edwin, takes it off with his jacket. It does not adhere to him when asleep or in anger, or aroused by any passion or inspiration. I seem to hear pronounced by some of his kin at such a time his original wild name in some jaw-breaking or else melodious tongue.

Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard, and yet we are so early weaned from

her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man,—a sort of breeding in and in, which produces at most a merely English nobility, a civilisation destined to have a speedy limit

In society, in the best institutions of men, it is easy to detect a certain precocity. When we should still be growing children, we are already little men. Give me a culture which imports much muck from the meadows, and deepens the soil,—not that which trusts to heating manures and improved implements and modes of culture only!

Many a poor sore-eyed student that I have heard of would grow faster, both intellectually and physically, if, instead of sitting up so very late, he honestly slumbered a fool's allowance.

There may be an excess even of informing light. Niepce, a Frenchman, discovered "actinism," that power in the sun's rays which produces a chemical effect,—that granite rocks, and stone structures, and statues of metal, "are all alike destructively acted upon during the hours of sunshine, and, but for provisions of Nature no less wonderful, would soon perish under the delicate touch of the most subtle of the agencies of the universe." But he observed that "those bodies which underwent this change during the daylight possessed the power of restoring themselves to their original conditions during the hours of night, when this excitement was no longer influencing them." Hence it has been inferred that "the hours of darkness are as necessary to the inorganic creation as we know night and sleep are to the organic kingdom." Not even does the moon shine every night, but gives place to darkness.

I would not have every man nor every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated. part will be tillage, but the greater part will be meadow and forest, not only serving an immediate use, but preparing a mould against a distant future, by the annual decay of the vegetation which it supports.

There are other letters for the child to learn than those which Cadmus invented. The Spaniards have a good term to express this wild and dusky knowledge,—*Gramática parda*, tawny

grammar,—a kind of mother-wit derived from that same leopard to which I have referred

We have heard of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge It is said that knowledge is power, and the like Methinks there is equal need of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Ignorance, what we will call Beautiful Knowledge, a knowledge useful in a higher sense for what is most of our boasted so-called knowledge but a conceit that we know something, which robs us of the advantage of our actual ignorance? What we call knowledge is often our positive ignorance, ignorance our negative knowledge By long years of patient industry and reading of the newspapers—for what are the libraries of science but files of newspapers?—a man accumulates a myriad facts, lays them up in his memory, and then when in some spring of his life he saunters abroad into the Great Fields of thought, he, as it were, goes to grass like a horse and leaves all his harness behind in the stable I would say to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, sometimes,—Go to grass You have eaten hay long enough The spring has come with its green crop The very cows are driven to their country pastures before the end of May, though I have heard of one unnatural farmer who kept his cow in the barn and fed her on hay all the year round So, frequently, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge treats its cattle

A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful,—while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless, besides being ugly Which is the best man to deal with,—he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?

My desire for knowledge is intermittent, but my desire to bathe my head in atmospheres unknown to my feet is perennial and constant The highest that we can attain to is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence I do not know that this higher knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before,—a discovery

that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. It is the lighting up of the mist by the sun. Man cannot *know* in any higher sense than this, any more than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of the sun. Ὡς τὶ νοῶν οὐ κέλνον νοήσεις,—“You will not perceive that, as perceiving a particular thing,” say the Chaldean Oracles.

There is something servile in the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey. We may study the laws of matter at and for our convenience, but a successful life knows no law. It is an unfortunate discovery certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know before that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist,—and with respect to knowledge we are all children of the mist. The man who takes the liberty to live is superior to all the laws, by virtue of his relation to the law-maker. “That is active duty,” says the Vishnu Purana, “which is not for our bondage, that is knowledge which is for our liberation. all other duty is good only unto weariness, all other knowledge is only the cleverness of an artist.”

It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our histories, how little exercised we have been in our minds, how few experiences we have had. I would fain be assured that I am growing apace and rankly, though my very growth disturb this dull equanimity,—though it be with struggle through long, dark, muggy nights or seasons of gloom. It would be well, if all our lives were a divine tragedy even, instead of this trivial comedy or farce. Dante, Bunyan, and others, appear to have been exercised in their minds more than we. They were subjected to a kind of culture such as our district schools and colleges do not contemplate. Even Mahomet, though many may scream at his name, had a good deal more to live for, ay, and to die for, than they have commonly.

When, at rare intervals, some thought visits one, as perchance he is walking on a railroad, then indeed the cars go by without his hearing them. But soon, by some inexorable law, our life goes by and the cars return.

"Gentle breeze, that wanderest unseen,
And bendest the thistles round Loira of storms,
Traveller of the windy glens,
Why hast thou left my ear so soon?"

While almost all men feel an attraction drawing them to society, few are attracted strongly to Nature. In their relation to Nature men appear to me for the most part, notwithstanding their arts, lower than the animals. It is not often a beautiful relation, as in the case of the animals. How little appreciation of the beauty of the landscape there is among us! We have to be told that the Greeks called the world *Κόσμος*, Beauty, or Order, but we do not see clearly why they did so, and we esteem it at best only a curious philological fact.

For my part, I feel that with regard to Nature I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world into which I make occasional and transient forays only, and my patriotism and allegiance to the State into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper. Unto a life which I call natural I would gladly follow even a will-o'-the-wisp through bogs and sloughs unimaginable, but no moon nor firefly has shown me the causeway to it. Nature is a personality so vast and universal that we have never seen one of her features. The walker in the familiar fields which stretch around my native town sometimes finds himself in another land than is described in their owners' deeds, as it were in some far-away field on the confines of the actual Concord, where her jurisdiction ceases, and the idea which the word Concord suggests ceases to be suggested. These farms which I have myself surveyed, these bounds which I have set up, appear dimly still as through a mist, but they have no chemistry to fix them, they fade from the surface of the glass, and the picture which the painter painted stands out dimly from beneath. The world with which we are commonly acquainted leaves no trace, and it will have no anniversary.

I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood.

as into some noble hall I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me,—to whom the sun was servant,—who had not gone into society in the village,—who had not been called on I saw their park, their pleasure-ground, beyond through the wood, in Spaulding's cranberry-meadow The pines furnished them with gables as they grew Their house was not obvious to vision, the trees grew through it I do not know whether I heard the sounds of a suppressed hilarity or not. They seemed to recline on the sunbeams They have sons and daughters They are quite well The farmer's cart-path, which leads directly through their hall, does not in the least put them out,—as the muddy bottom of a pool is sometimes seen through the reflected skies They never heard of Spaulding, and do not know that he is their neighbor,—notwithstanding I heard him whistle as he drove his team through the house Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives Their coat of arms is simply a lichen I saw it painted on the pines and oaks Their attics were in the tops of the trees They are of no politics There was no noise of labor I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum,—as of a distant hive in May, which perchance was the sound of their thinking They had no idle thoughts, and no one without could see their work, for their industry was not as in knots and excrescences embayed

But I find it difficult to remember them They fade irrevocably out of my mind even now while I speak and endeavor to recall them, and recollect myself It is only after a long and serious effort to recollect my best thoughts that I become again aware of their cohabitancy If it were not for such families as this, I think I should move out of Concord

We are accustomed to say in New England that few and fewer pigeons visit us every year Our forests furnish no mast for them So, it would seem, few and fewer thoughts visit

each growing man from year to year, for the grove in our minds is laid waste,—sold to feed unnecessary fires of ambition, or sent to mill, and there is scarcely a twig left for them to perch on. They no longer build nor breed with us. In some more genial season, perchance, a faint shadow flits across the landscape of the mind, cast by the *wings* of some thought in its vernal or autumnal migration, but, looking up, we are unable to detect the substance of the thought itself. Our winged thoughts are turned to poultry. They no longer soar, and they attain only to a Shanghai and Cochin-China grandeur. Those *gra-a-ate thoughts*, those *gra-a-ate men* you hear of!

We hug the earth,—how rarely we mount! Methinks we might elevate ourselves a little more. We might climb a tree, at least. I found my account in climbing a tree once. It was a tall white pine, on the top of a hill, and though I got well pitched, I was well paid for it, for I discovered new mountains in the horizon which I had never seen before,—so much more of the earth and the heavens. I might have walked about the foot of the tree for threescore years and ten, and yet I certainly should never have seen them. But, above all, I discovered around me,—it was near the end of June,—on the ends of the topmost branches only, a few minute and delicate red cone-like blossoms, the fertile flower of the white pine looking heavenward. I carried straightway to the village the topmost spire, and showed it to stranger jurymen who walked the streets,—for it was court-week,—and to farmers and lumber-dealers and wood-choppers and hunters, and not one had ever seen the like before, but they wondered as at a star dropped down. Tell of ancient architects finishing their works on the tops of columns as perfectly as on the lower and more visible parts! Nature has from the first expanded the minute blossoms of the forest only toward the heavens, above men's heads and unobserved by them. We see only the flowers that are under our feet in the meadows. The pines have developed their delicate blossoms on the highest twigs of the wood every summer for ages, as well over the heads of Nature's red children as of her white

ones, yet scarcely a farmer or hunter in the land has ever seen them

Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present. He is blessed over all mortals who loses no moment of the passing life in remembering the past. Unless our philosophy hears the cock crow in every barn-yard within our horizon, it is belated. That sound commonly reminds us that we are growing rusty and antique in our employments and habits of thought. His philosophy comes down to a more recent time than ours. There is something suggested by it that is a newer testament,—the gospel according to this moment. He has not fallen astern, he has got up early and kept up early, and to be where he is to be in season, in the foremost rank of time. It is an expression of the health and soundness of Nature, a brag for all the world,—healthiness as of a spring burst forth, a new fountain of the Muses, to celebrate this last instant of time. Where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed. Who has not betrayed his master many times since last he heard that note?

The merit of this bird's strain is in its freedom from all plantiveness. The singer can easily move us to tears or to laughter, but where is he who can excite in us a pure morning joy? When, in doleful dumps, breaking the awful stillness of our wooden sidewalk on a Sunday, or, perchance, a watcher in the house of mourning, I hear a cockerel crow far or near, I think to myself, "There is one of us well, at any rate,"—and with a sudden gush return to my senses.

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow, the source of a small brook, when the sun at last, just before setting, after a cold gray day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and the softest, brightest morning sunlight fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon, and on the leaves of the shrub-oaks on the hill-side, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before,

and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen for ever and ever an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.

The sun sets on some retired meadow, where no house is visible, with all the glory and splendor that it lavishes on cities, and, perchance, as it has never set before,—where there is but a solitary marsh-hawk to have his wings gilded by it, or only a musquash looks out from his cabin, and there is some little black-veined brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump. We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.

So we saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in autumn.

POEMS

SMOKE²³⁴

Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest,
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts,
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun,
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame
(*Walden*, "House-warming")

RUMORS FROM AN ÆOLIAN HARP²³⁵

There is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life

There every virtue has its birth,
Ere it descends upon the earth,
And thither every deed returns,
Which in the generous bosom burns

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung,
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,

And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky
(*A Week*, "Monday")

TO THE MAIDEN IN THE EAST²³⁶

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye,
And though its gracious light
Ne'er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill,
Conveys thy gentle will

Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you,
That some attentive cloud
Did pause among the crowd
Over my head,
While gentle things were said. 10

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung,
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant,
The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind 20

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud,

The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
 Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash

30

From yonder comes the sun,
But soon his course is run,
Rising to trivial day
Along his dusty way,
But thy noontide completes
Only auroral heats,
 Nor ever sets,
To hasten vain regrets

40

Direct thy pensive eye
Into the western sky,
And when the evening star
Does glimmer from afar
Upon the mountain line,
Accept it for a sign
 That I am near,
And thinking of thee here

I'll be thy Mercury,
Thou Cytherea to me,
Distinguished by thy face
The earth shall learn my place,
As near beneath thy light
Will I outwear the night,
 With mingled ray
Leading the westward way

50

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me,
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,

60

As thou wert by my side,
Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot

I'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place,
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore,
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float, 70
And cardinal-flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers
(*A Week*, "Sunday")

SYMPATHY²³⁷

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
But after manned him for her own stronghold

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve away
For a pretense to feebleness and sin

Say not that Cæsar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame, 10
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came

No strength went out to get him victory,
When all was income of its own accord,
For where he went none other was to see,
But all were parcel of their noble lord

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,

And revolutions works without a murmur,
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies 20

So was I taken unawares by this,
I quite forgot my homage to confess,
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
I might have loved him had I loved him less

Each moment as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met

We two were one while we did sympathize,
So could we not the simplest bargain drive, 30
And what avails it now that we are wise,
If absence doth this doubleness contrive³

Eternity may not the chance repeat,
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
For elegy has other subject none,
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
Knell of departure from that other one 40

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy,
With fitting strain resound ye woods and fields,
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
Than all the joys other occasion yields

Is't then too late the damage to repair³
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left

If I but love that virtue which he is,
Though it be scented in the morning air, 50
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare
(*A Week*, "Wednesday")

THE INWARD MORNING²³⁸

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
Which outward nature wears,
And in its fashion's hourly change
It all things else repairs

In vain I look for change abroad,
And can no difference find,
Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Illumes my inmost mind

What is it gilds the trees and clouds,
And paints the heavens so gay, 10
But yonder fast-abiding light
With its unchanging ray?

Lo, when the sun streams through the wood,
Upon a winter's morn,
Where'er his silent beams intrude
The murky night is gone

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or humble flowers anticipate
The insect's noonday hum,— 20

Till the new light with morning cheer
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles?

I've heard within my inmost soul
 Such cheerful morning news,
 In the horizon of my mind
 Have seen such orient hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,
 When the first birds awake,
 Are heard within some silent wood,
 Where they the small twigs break,

30

Or in the eastern skies are seen,
 Before the sun appears,
 The harbingers of summer heats
 Which from afar he bears

(*A Week*, "Wednesday")

THE SUMMER RAIN²³⁹

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,
 'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large
 Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
 And will not mind to hit their proper targe

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
 Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,
 What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,
 Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
 What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,
 If juster battles are enacted now
 Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

10

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
 If red or black the gods will favor most,
 Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
 Struggling to heave some rock against the host

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower,—
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue 20

This bed of herd's-grass and wild oats was spread
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use,
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,
And gently swells the wind to say all's well,
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats,
But see that globe come rolling down its stem, 30
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,
And now it sinks into my garment's hem

Drip, drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distills from every bough,
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so,
My dripping locks,—they would become an elf,
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go 40
(*A Week*, "Thursday")

PRAYER 240

Great God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself,
That in my action I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye,

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me,

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practice more than my tongue saith, 10
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs

NOTES

Volume and page numbers, unless otherwise specified, are to the Walden Edition

A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS

1 The text here reprinted is that of the First Edition, Boston, 1849. Page references appended to individual passages are to the Walden Edition, vol. I. For a detailed chronology of the trip, which actually occupied a fortnight from Saturday, August 31, to Friday, September 13, see Sanborn, *Thoreau* (1917), pp. 228-9. Of the thousand copies printed at the author's risk, 75 were given away. Munroe, the publisher, sold 219, returned 706 to Thoreau. See *Journal*, XI, 459 (Oct. 28, 1853). Says Salt (*Thoreau*, p. 29), "If the reader wishes to recognize those copies which were bought from Thoreau himself, he will turn to page 396. On the bottom margin he will find six lines written in pencil and by Thoreau himself the addition being so much of the original text as was overlooked by the compositor."

2 Thoreau had the usual good grounding in the classics accorded students at the Concord Academy. From the fact that in July, 1835, after but two years in college, he was assigned the part of Cato in a Greek dialogue, we may assume that he was not only preserving his contact with the ancient languages, but developing a special fondness for Greek. At a little later date, 1840, his own library included, among no less than fifty Greek and Latin works, Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Lucian, and Plutarch, as well as a Greek Testament. He produced excellent translations of *Prometheus Bound* (subsequently used by Harvard students as a "pony") and the Anacreontics printed in the *Dial*. Sanborn says of him that he was the best Greek scholar in the Concord group, and adds that "he read Latin and French as readily as English, German, Italian, and Spanish more or less, and had some knowledge of several dialects of the American Indians" (*Thoreau* [1917], p. 260). Elsewhere in this volume is reprinted an early passage from the *Journal* (VII, 29, Feb. 16, 1838) in which he pays eloquent tribute to the undying charm of Greece itself. Four other references in the same volume of the *Journal* mention specific authors or praise the Classics in general. The entry for August 26, 1838 (p. 56), again singles out Homer; that for November 5, 1839 (p. 93), and that for January 29, 1840 (p. 116), estimate the art of Æschylus, that dated presumably 1845 (p. 371) sums up his feeling for the Classics as the greatest inheritance of the past. In all this there seems no hint of intellectual snobbishness or of pose, but the most

genuine admiration. On the general subject of his reading in the classics see Gohdes, "Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Arts."

3 All who knew him best are agreed, and the statements from his pen, and the manifold revisions of his writings prove, that Thoreau took the business of writing very seriously. Naturally he has most to say about the matter in his early years when he was engaged in disciplining and polishing his own style. In general, his ideal was classic in its severity, though passages will occur now and then which remind us that Daniel Webster was his contemporary, and that Emerson himself was a "spellbinder." The theory that physical labor makes for a serious view of composition has its elements of truth, with the qualification that too much labor may produce overwhelming fatigue. Not every genius can survive, as did that of Burns, such an ordeal. Moreover, though he took his share of responsibility for the care of his parents and sisters, Thoreau was, rather more than most men, the master of his own time.

To the reader sensitive to echoes, there is in this passage evidence of the powerful influence of Carlyle, both in thought and style. The insistence upon seriousness, and upon a product worthy of the powers of the producer, is Carlyle doctrine. The events recorded in *A Week*, and the *Journal* entries upon which it is based, are of a decade previous. Nevertheless, the revision took place at Walden Pond, when Thoreau was also occupied in the composition of his enthusiastic essay, "Thomas Carlyle and his Works," published in 1847. The concluding paragraph is somewhat in contrast, with its insistence upon silence and a mystic, transcendental calm, though silence, too, was a Carlyle law, honored by its promulgator rather in the breach than in the observance.

4 One may perhaps be permitted to remark on the breadth of the learning of Thoreau, thus unassumingly expressed, in a casual reference to the doctrine of the Unities, once so prized in dramatic construction.

5 For a narrative of Thoreau's experiences, his reasons for not paying his tax, and an elaboration of his position as regards the rights of organized government when in conflict with his rights, see "Civil Disobedience" (IV, 374 ff., or as reprinted in *Selections* preceding, pp. 245 ff.)

6 Paul Dudley (1675-1751), alumnus of Harvard College, who, in 1745, became Chief Justice of Massachusetts, established by his will the annual Dudleian lectures at Harvard.

7 Thoreau was extraordinarily sensitive to sounds. A keen lover of music for its own sake, he shows also a tendency, as here, to load it with mystical or Transcendental significance. Channing says (*Thoreau the Poet-Naturalist*, p. 125) that Thoreau loved to let himself go upon occasion, and, we may suspect, knew that what he said in such a "rhapsody" would not bear logical analysis or cold appraisal. At the time of Thoreau's death, Louisa M. Alcott wrote some beautiful verses (reprinted in *Salt*, pp. 215-216) which begin as follows:

"We sighing said, 'Our Pan is dead,
His pipe hangs mute beside the river,
Around it wistful sunbeams quiver,
But Music's airy voice is fled'"

8 These familiar lines, slightly altered, are a part of the longer poem, "Inspiration," which was first printed in the *Commonwealth*, June 19, 1863, and reprinted in *Walden Ed*, V, 396

9 Additional information about contemporary conditions upon canals will be found in the recent novels of Walter Edmonds, *Rome Haul* and *Erie Water*

10 Spenser, *The Ruins of Rome*, st xxix, ll 13 and 14

11 Spenser, *The Ruins of Time*, ll 76 and 77

12 Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), famous divine and author, wrote *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642), and *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662), along with many other works

13 William Camden (1551-1623) was admirably trained at Christ's Hospital and St Paul's Schools, and at Oxford, and in turn rose to be the master of famous Westminster School. His spare time, however, he devoted to the writing of a Latin history of the British Isles, *Britannia*, which, after its first appearance in 1586, was expanded by his own hand and by the hands of later scholars

14 Regarding this passage, Thoreau's closest friend, Channing, has again given specific warning in his biography of Thoreau (pp 30-31). It is, he says, "poetical and romantic," "a work of art." Thoreau was "romancing with his subject." He had, thinks Channing, a genuine capacity and gift for friendship. "In the best and practical sense, no one had better friends or was better loved."

Just what he yearned for, it is perhaps hard to say with certainty. Van Doren (*Thoreau*, p 22) thinks it "was never the affection of or for this or that particular person, but was the sentiment of affection, or the capacity for affection, itself." But whether or not his search had an immediate human objective, it gives every evidence in the frequency of allusions in the *Journal* and in their poignant tone of disillusionment or regret, that while, as Stevenson says, "No one ever spoke more loftily about friendship," Thoreau's own words (X, 313-315, Aug 24, 1852), "I have been disappointed from first to last in my friends, " are perhaps the truer.

There is, to be sure, at times the same note of selfishness which repels many readers of Emerson's essay on "Friendship." Kindness done us should inspire kindness to others (VII, 134, May 14, 1840), but need not be repaid (VII, 279, Sept 2, 1841). If my friend cannot fit his atmosphere into mine, it is of no use for me to stay (VIII, 109, Nov 24, 1850). He finds he hates his friends when he is near them (VIII, 98, 1850). A companion on a walk means (X, 262, July 27, 1852) "I have relinquished in my design some closeness of communion with Nature." Setting out on a boat trip he

deliberately leaves behind someone who would have liked to go along, but was likely to spoil his enjoyment (XV, 46-47, Aug 31, 1856). He loves "the simple, reserved countrymen, my neighbors, who mind their own business and let me alone" (XV, 151, Dec 3, 1856). But this is only part of the story. Like all of us he has moments (VII, 456, 1837-47) when he realizes that his friends have been thinking of him and planning for him when he little realizes it. He is deeply regretful (IX, 167-8, Dec 31, 1851) over his apparent unkindness to his dearest friend, and (XV, 276-7, Feb 23, 1857) speaks of the physical pain, the "aching of the breast," caused by grief over the passing of old friendship.

15 For an author whose fame rests on his prose, and the bulk of whose work falls in that category, Thoreau writes a great deal about the nature of poetry. This is in part because, as in the *Journal* for Sept 5, 1841 (VII, 283), he expresses his belief in the essentially musical and measured character of all the "loftiest written wisdom." He is here taking of poetry the same serious and purposeful view that Carlyle did, and showing a like disposition to minimize the purely technical and metrical aspects. Like Carlyle, too, he emphasizes the supreme function of the poet in the primitive state, where his position often overlaps that of the seer and philosopher. In the distinction which Thoreau undertakes to draw between the "mere Genius" and the true Poet, genius is liberally endowed with philosophical insight and artistic power, but it is the true poet only, who, as Adams (*Henry Thoreau's Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 67) points out, "becomes a mouthpiece of Divinity."

As Dr. Adams, in his excellent thesis, which I have been permitted to examine, goes on to show, this attempted distinction was slow in formulation in Thoreau's own mind. In *A Week* (I, 362-66), he absolutely identifies the poet with the genius, and, a few pages earlier (p. 350), was busy contrasting genius with mere talent. The idea of the poet as a mouthpiece of the divine, at which he later arrived, leans clearly toward the transcendental.

JOURNAL (1838-1847)

16. The excerpts from Thoreau's *Journal* included in this volume are reprinted by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, and the pagination indicated is that of the *Walden Edition*.

17. In *A Week* (I, 94-98), beginning with the statement, "It is enough if Homer but say the sun sets," he praises Homer for his eminently natural qualities, his oft-quoted similes, his undying charm. Specific passages are singled out for praise in the *Journal* (VII, 56, 59, 60, 192) during the period from 1838 to 1841.

18. *Nootka*—an island and sound on the ocean side of Vancouver Island, B. C. Thoreau was an inveterate reader of geographical and travel books, and the interest he hints at in such matters was genuine.

19. The Greek word *Periplus*—"a sailing round"—purports to be a

translation of the Phoenician inscription on a tablet, hung in a Carthaginian temple by Hanno (d. 480 B.C.), reputed son of Hamulcar, upon his return from a voyage of discovery along the west coast of Africa

20 This passage reappears as the first paragraph of the "Conclusion" of *Walden*. See Selections preceding, p. 162.

21 Thoreau's sensitiveness to sound is illustrated in his earliest published volume, *A Week* (I, 181, Selections preceding, pp. 12-14, q.v.), and elaborated in the chapter on "Sound" in *Walden*. On Cape Cod (*Cape Cod*, IV, 71), it is the sound of the piping plover which sums up for him the loneliness of the sea. On several occasions (cf. *Journal*, VIII, 330) he comments on the sound of the wind in the telegraph wires as resembling an æolian harp. Distant music, heard at evening (*Journal*, XIV, 347, May 19, 1856), exercised a fascination over him. In part, his sensitiveness to music may be accounted for by the fact that he was, himself, an excellent musician, singing, and playing beautifully on the flute, but for Thoreau music had a mystical, transcendental significance—was one thing which, as he points out in the *Journal* entry for Jan. 15, 1857 (XV, 222), made life tolerable, and gave it amplitude.

22 Thoreau here draws a sharp distinction between the purely scientific study of Nature, with a view to the mere accumulation and classification of facts, and the loving association in which the chief result is spiritual. Cf. *Journal* (XI, 4, Selections preceding, pp. 179-180), where, in response to a government inquiry, he even classifies himself as a transcendentalist.

PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED

23. The essay is printed as it appeared in the *Democratic Review* for November, 1843 (XIII, 451-463).

24 For a discussion of Fourierism see note 102.

25 The passage beginning with this sentence and consisting of the direct quotation from Etzler, of the two following paragraphs, and of the first sentence of the third, omitted from Thoreau's final version (IV, 286).

26 The above quotation omitted from final version (IV, 287).

27 The above paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 288).

28 The above extended quotation omitted from final version (IV, 288).

29 The above quotation omitted from final version (IV, 290).

30 The quotation to this point omitted from final version (IV, 290).

31. The two quoted paragraphs above omitted from final version (IV, 292).

32 The passage from here to the end of the paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 295).

33 The above sentence omitted from final version (IV, 296).

34 The above paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 296).

35. The passage from here to the end of the paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 297).

36 The point of view here expressed is notably individualistic
 "Nothing can be effected but by one man"

37 The above paragraph omitted from Thoreau's final version (IV, 300)

38 Passages like these help us to see the temperamental difficulties which kept Thoreau from joining the Brook Farm or similar visionary enterprises. Something in his nature resisted the blandishments of enthusiasts and prospectuses

WALDEN

39 The text of *Walden* here reprinted is that of the First Edition, Boston, 1854

40 Thoreau scrupulously explains (II, 94) that the beginning of bona fide residence at Walden Pond—nights as well as days—was July 4, 1845. He "finally left Walden, September 6, 1847" (II, 351). In the first paragraph of the original manuscript (*Walden, or Life in the Woods*, The Bibliophile Society, Boston, 1909), he states that most of the book was written about 1846 and a considerable part read as lectures at the Concord Lyceum. These were delivered, Sanborn tells us, between 1846 and 1849.

41 A following sentence in the manuscript, here omitted, announces, Whitman fashion, that he intends to "brag a good deal more than is according to the accepted rules of good taste."

42 Thoreau's interest in the lives of literary men is expressed on more than one occasion. In the *Journal* entry for August 9, 1841 (VII, 270), he indicates a distinct preference for autobiography as compared with biography. He makes this a part of his defense for the writing of *Walden*. This feeling arose also in part from the conviction that the true poem is the life of the poet. Cf. *A Week* (I, 365).

"True verses," says he (*Journal*, VII, 275, Aug. 28, 1841), "are not counted on the poet's fingers, but on his heart strings." He suggests (*Journal*, VIII, 403, Aug. 19, 1851) that some traveler "stay at home and report the phenomena of his own life." He speaks twice of Goethe's assertion that he never had a chagrin but he turned it into a poem (letter to Harrison Blake, May 2, 1848, VI, 168. *Journal*, XI, 210, June 1, 1853). "The poet," he tells us on another occasion (*Journal*, XII, 188, April 8, 1854), "deals with his privatest experience."

43 There follows in the original manuscript a considerable expansion of this idea (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 3-4).

44 Iolaus, misspelled Iolas in first edition, was son of the half-brother of Hercules, Iphicles, and companion of Hercules in his labors. For his assistance Hercules gave him his first wife, Megara. Iolaus was later worshipped at Thebes along with his more famous relative. Iolaus is also a character in the *Heracleidae* of Euripides, where he appears leading the children of Heracles to Athens for safety, and a little later as their suc-

cessful defender in battle, the gods having granted his plea for one day of youth. In a letter addressed to the secretary of his Harvard class on the tenth anniversary (1847) of his graduation, Thoreau repeats this allusion in other words. Having remarked that his occupations are legion, he continues, "If you will act the part of Iolas, and apply a hot iron to any of these heads, I shall be greatly obliged to you" (Henry Williams, in *Memorials of the Class of 1837 of Harvard University*, Boston 1887, reprinted in *Pertaining to Thoreau*, p. 169).

45 In the text of the original ms (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 4) there are interpolated before the quotation the words "Ovid says" the passage being from the *Metamorphoses*, I, 414-415. Sanborn, the editor, indicates in a footnote (p. 5) that the publishers of the first edition, perhaps with the consent, or even at the suggestion of the author, omitted four sentences of the ms which he reprints. Thoreau's use of a Raleigh translation of the quotation is one small fruit of that extensive study of this Elizabethan man of action which resulted in the essay *Sir Walter Raleigh*, written between 1842 and 1845, but not published until 1905 (See bibliography).

46 Passages like these must be kept in mind, when one is considering the antisocial aspects of Thoreau's nature. Thoreau has a great fondness for solitude, he finds serious obstacles in the way of the achievement of perfect friendship, he speaks in depreciatory terms of philanthropy, and yet he reveals here a concern, all too rare, especially in his day, over the tragedies of wage slavery, the unenlightened lives of the millions in the workaday world. Thoreau took a new coat to little Johnny Ruordan (*Journal*, IX, 241, 289, Jan. 28, Feb. 8, 1852) and collected money for a poor Irishman (*Journal*, XI, 438-9, Oct. 12, 1853). See also *Walden* (II, 60). Nevertheless, Thoreau was too much of a New Englander not to close on a note of individual responsibility.

47 The depreciatory tone adopted here toward abolitionism arises from the realization that there is white slavery as well as black, that agitation against Negro slavery is only part of a larger movement. Thoreau's interest in the cause, like that of Emerson, was intensified by his acquaintance with John Brown, and reached its height a little before his death, but Thoreau never was so tolerant of slavery as Emerson originally was. In *A Week* (I, 135), published in 1849, he says, "I do not wish, it happens, to be associated with Massachusetts, either in holding slaves or in conquering Mexico", in the *Journal* (VIII, 175) for April, 1851, he compares the bravery of Concord inhabitants in defending their bridge against the British with their placid attitude toward slavery, in the *Journal* (IX, 37-8) for Oct. 1, 1851, he records having put a fugitive slave on the tram for Canada, in the *Journal* entries (XII, 313, 355-8) for May 29 and June 16-18, 1854, he refers with contempt to a spiritless governor, unwilling to prevent the return of a Massachusetts Negro to the Southern master who claims him. Thoreau's attitude during his last years is amply demonstrated by his close friendship with Brown and his courageous defense of him. That

the paragraph underwent condensation in publication is clear from a comparison with the manuscript (Bibl Soc ed, I, 59-60)

48 Perhaps an allusion to the line in Addison's *Cato*, V, 1 "T is the divinity that stirs within us"

49 William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was born in a middle-class family of great antiquity, was graduated at Cambridge University, and in 1780 became an M P and a political associate of Pitt His interest in the abolition of slavery dates from 1787, the time of his conversion to evangelical Christianity It was exactly twenty years later that his persistent parliamentary agitation of the matter resulted in the abolition of the slave trade He had been dead a month, however, when, in 1833, the Emancipation Bill was passed, an event the centenary of which has recently been celebrated

50 The debt of Robert Louis Stevenson to this and other passages from Thoreau in such essays as "Æs Triplex," "Crabbed Age and Youth," and "An Apology for Idlers" must have attracted the attention of every thoughtful reader Van Doren (p 84) adds "The very first sentence of 'The Service' would have done, as far as tone is concerned, for the first sentence of 'Æs Triplex' The 'Week' reminds one of the 'Inland Voyage' in the first paragraph and on almost every page thereafter Had Stevenson not been fascinated by the man himself, his judgments upon him could not have been so trenchant and subtle as they were, he told some one in an enthusiastic moment that he supposed he had never written ten words after he had once read Thoreau which would not recall him"

51 In the original ms there is here inserted a reference to the agility of young savages in climbing lofty trees, as described in *Typee*, Herman Melville's romance, which had appeared in 1846 Melville had been in 1850 an intimate of Hawthorne's when the latter was resident at Lenox, Massachusetts, and it is probable that Thoreau, who read little fiction, may have had the book brought to his attention by Hawthorne, with whom he was well acquainted at Concord, both during Hawthorne's first residence there, and again in 1852, when Hawthorne returned

52. The original ms (Bibl Soc ed, I, 63) has at this point a sentence, here omitted "The departing and the arriving spirit,—the joyful and the sad,—the innocent and happy child and the melancholy suicide,—the northern farmer and the southern slave"

53 Between this and the following paragraph, three paragraphs of the original ms are omitted (Cf Bibl Soc ed, I, 65-68) In one of these he presents the concept of animals as "imperfect and infantile men"

54 The experience here narrated is contained in the *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of his Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle* (London, 1839, III, 240), Charles Darwin being the author of the third volume The Harvard Library acquired the volume in 1843

55 Presumably the Australian aborigines, that continent having been commonly known up to the middle of the nineteenth century as New Holland.

56 There follows in the ms a sentence (Bibl Soc ed, I, 71), perhaps referring to Emerson, in which Thoreau admits that occasional philosophers have contrived to live lives of practical success

57 The extent and definiteness of the allegorical significance of this story, omitted in the original ms at this point, has been the subject of much speculation That it somehow suggests the unattainable objects of Thoreau's life is fairly well agreed Van Doren, in his recent biography (pp 17 ff), argues that this was "not an intellectual but an emotional" disappointment, arising "in the domain of the human relations" He calls attention to a passage in the *Dial* (IV, 206), which he regards as the germ of this one The present paragraph appears in the ms as a footnote to a passage in the chapter on "Winter Animals," where Thoreau mentions a curious hunter who had "lost a dog but found a man" (*Walden*, II, 306, *Journal*, VII, 398) T M Raysor in "The Love Story of Thoreau" repeats the extraordinary statement, reported to have come from Thoreau's own lips, that the references to 'a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove' were to Edmund Sewall, John Thoreau, and Ellen Sewall

58 There follows in the ms a paragraph here omitted (Bibl Soc ed, I, 6)

59 When Thoreau wrote this, he doubtless had in mind, as Burroughs suggests (*Indoor Studies*, p 1), his own manuscript journal The remark has, however, a parallelism with his actual career as a contributor to magazines not to be overlooked

This description fits the *Dial* perfectly, though Thoreau was close to the editors and was generously represented in its pages His poem "Symphy," and an article on "Aulus Persius Flaccus," were in the first number, July, 1840 A full list of his contributions will be found in Allen, *A Bibliography of Henry David Thoreau*, pp 63-68 He assisted in drumming up subscribers, and in the editorial duties, yet "neither *The Service* nor the *Raleigh* got into the *Dial* for which they were written" In the original ms there is inserted just here the sentence, "Literary contracts are little binding"

Thoreau's experiences with other magazines were, however, more properly exasperating, because their contributors expected pay His "Walk to Wachusett," printed in 1843 in the *Boston Miscellany*, was the occasion of much subsequent correspondence, in which Emerson had a friendly hand The essay on Carlyle was not paid for until a year after it had appeared in *Graham's Magazine* (March, 1847)

60 *Well-known lawyer* Samuel Hoar (1778-1856)

61 So far as practical details went, this private transaction was the shaping into final form for publication of the preliminary notes on the journey taken with his brother in 1839 on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers For Thoreau the words probably had also a spiritual and transcendental significance

62 Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse (1741 -c 1788), in

1785, with the two ships *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*, set out to discover the Northwest Passage, and to make a general exploration of the Pacific. He visited Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Siberia. His second in command and ten of the crew were murdered in the Samoan Islands. Early in 1788 La Pérouse touched Australia at Botany Bay, the last heard of him. The wreckage of what were assumed to be his ships was afterwards found on Vanicoro. This island, a volcanic, coral-encircled member of the Santa Cruz group, is mentioned by Darwin (*Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of his Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle*, III, 555), together with the disaster of La Pérouse.

63 Though very likely inspired by the reading of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, this passage presents merely the idea of the importance of clothes in social thinking,—not Carlyle's idea that it is the clothes and not the man inside whom we salute. It is clothes as a luxury and superfluity that here attract Thoreau's attention.

64 Ida Laura Pfeiffer, the adventurous and fluent German traveler here referred to, was the author of a work, originally published in 1850 in Vienna, under the title, *Eine Frauenfahrt um die Welt Reise von Wien nach Brasilien, Chili, Otaheiti, China, Ost-Indien, Persien, und Kleinasien*. The second edition of this work in English, printed in 1850, and acquired by the Harvard Library in April, 1854, bears the title, *A Woman's Journey Round the World from Vienna to Brazil, Chili, Tahiti, China, Hindostan, Persia, and Asia Minor. An Unabridged Translation from the German of Ida Pfeiffer*. The sentence referred to occurs in Chap. XXII, p. 301: "I had two letters, one to a German physician, the other to the governor. I did not wish to go to the latter in my travelling dress, as I was again among cultivated people, who are accustomed to judge of you by your dress, and there was no inn."

65 *Old philosopher* Bias (circa 6th century B.C.) Thoreau relates the incident in his *Journal* entry for July 12, 1840 (Cf. VII, 169-70).

66 This was, Sanborn tells us (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 79), Miss Mary Minott, sister of the several times mentioned and much admired George Minott. Though disposed to flaunt his carelessness of his personal appearance, as see *A Yankee in Canada* (V, 31-32), Thoreau was most particular as to the material and cut of his clothing, insisting, among other things, that there must be a pocket of just a size to accommodate the notebook without which he never set out walking. In a late entry in the *Journal* (XIX, 229-232, March 26, 1860), he discusses the type of attire best adapted to use in the woods.

67 For the original of this passage see *Journal*, VII, 196 (Feb. 5, 1841). The special observation, occasioned by the visit of some Swiss singers to Concord, has in *Walden* been generalized.

68 Allusion is made to the passage from Richard Lovelace's "To Althea from Prison."

"If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty'

69 Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford (1753-1814), was born at Woburn, Mass. When the British troops evacuated Boston in 1776, he went to England, where he rose to high official favor. For years an official adviser to the Elector of Bavaria at Munich, he was in 1791 made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire. It was following his return to England in 1795 that his lifelong interest in scientific matters led to the perfecting of the principles of construction of the common fireplace. For further light on his career see Lewis Einstein, *Divided Loyalties: Americans in England during the War of Independence*, London, 1933.

70 An odd spelling of *suant*, a dialectal word signifying 'running smoothly'.

71 There follow in the original ms (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 92-94) three paragraphs here omitted. In his attempt to demonstrate the commonly inefficient spending of money, Thoreau relates how he once provided twenty-five lectures for his native village for a total sum of \$100. This adventure as an impresario occurred in the winter of 1843-44.

72 *Music of Memnon*. A reference to the gigantic statue at Thebes from which music was supposed to issue at sunrise.

73 Edward Johnson's *History of New England* (1654) was also known by this title.

74 Cornelis van Tienhoven. Cf. E. B. O'Callaghan's *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, I, 365.

75 Thoreau gives so much accurate information at various points in his book regarding the pond of which he was so fond, that it is scarcely necessary to add that the hut was located near the road from Concord to Lincoln, perhaps a mile and a half south of the village, and on the north shore of the lake.

76 This was, according to Cooke (p. 81), Emerson himself. Salt, however (p. 87), says Alcott.

77 This is only one of many instances of the free adaptation of familiar and not so familiar quotations by Thoreau. Here he likely felt that any reader would recognize the opening line of Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

78 It is true that Thoreau elsewhere in *Walden* (II, 104-5) expresses contempt for the material contents of newspapers. However, Sanborn, in his note to the Bibliophile Society edition of the original ms. (I, 49), says, "As a matter of fact, few residents of Concord frequented the Post Office more punctually or read the newspapers (particularly the *New York Tribune*) more eagerly than Thoreau."

79 The "rausers" were, according to Cooke (p. 81), Emerson, Alcott, W. E. Channing, Burnill and George Curtis, Edmund Hosmer (with

whom the Curtis brothers were then residing), and his sons John, Edmund, and Andrew

80 In his original manuscript (Bibl Soc ed, I, 18-19), Thoreau inserted here a poem of five stanzas, beginning

I seek the Present Time,
No other clime,
Life in to-day,
Not to sail another way,
To Paris or to Rome,
Or farther still from home "

81 The two following paragraphs are omitted at this point in the Bibl Soc ed but are to be found elsewhere,—the first on I, 102-3, the second on I, 104 Between them, in the original ms, there appear two brief but amusing paragraphs, inveighing against the use of ice and of doormats as useless luxuries Who dictated their omission one can only guess

82 Emerson had shown to Thoreau a letter from Horatio Greenough, the sculptor See *Journal*, IX, 181-3 (Jan 11, 1852)

83 There is a distinct flavor of Ruskin about this discussion of the spiritual values of architecture Ruskin was no Carlyle in Thoreau's eyes He questioned the genuineness of Ruskin's contacts with Nature (*Journal*, XVI, 69, for Oct 6, and p 147, for Oct 29, 1857) Nevertheless, he shows thorough familiarity with Ruskin's writings, and here expresses the idea at the base of *Stones of Venice* and *Lamps of Architecture*

84 Thoreau had himself occupied a fourth floor room in Hollis Hall The expenses of dormitory life he vividly realized, because, despite strictest economy, he could never have continued in college had not his aunts and elder sister, and the college itself, supplemented the sums he was able to scrape together by teaching school and tutoring during vacations

85 Manufactured by a famous firm, James Rodgers and Sons, of Sheffield, England

86 The particular destination of the line, in the original ms. Louisiana, is of little significance Use of Morse's invention, electro-magnetic in principle, spread by leaps and bounds Between 1844, when New York, Baltimore, and Washington were united by a pioneer line, and the year 1850, more than fifty companies came into being

87 Harriet Martineau, a visitor to Concord in 1836-7, is the famous woman here referred to

88 Flying Childers was an English race horse, born in 1715, and "allowed to have been the fleetest horse that has ever appeared in the world" (Thomas Henry Taunton, *Portraits of Celebrated Race Horses*, London, 1887, I, 18.)

89 Thoreau planted these beans on land belonging to Emerson At later date he planted pine trees here at Emerson's direction.

Arthur Young (1741-1820) was the author of *The Farmer's Guide*

in *Hiring and Stocking Farms* (London, 1770), in which the idea here opposed is expounded. He wrote other works on agriculture, a science in which he became an acknowledged expert.

91 A careless reference to a speech by Napoleon to his soldiers in Egypt, when, referring to the Pyramids, he told them forty centuries were looking down upon them.

92 The fractions on this and the following page are a whimsical addition to the original ms., which gives the sums as \$62 and \$28 22.

93 Says Channing (p. 24) "Some have fancied because he moved to Walden he left his family. He bivouacked there, and really lived at home, where he went every day." Though this may be an overstatement, as some biographers maintain, there seems no question that Thoreau remained as fond as ever of his mother's cooking, often partook of it, and occasionally carried some of her handiwork back with him to his cabin. Cooke (p. 81) adds, "It was Thoreau's custom while at Walden to dine on Sundays with Emerson, and to stop at Hosmer's on his way back to the pond, often remaining to supper."

94 Ever since ancient times Egyptians have substituted artificial for natural methods of hatching eggs.

95 *De Agri Cultura*, cap. 74.

96 Taken from a poem, "New England's Annoyances," termed "the oldest known composition in English verse by an American colonist."

97 Cf. *Journal*, VII, 481 (undated), for the story on which this generalization is based.

98 William Bartram (1739-1823), author of *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*. Philadelphia, 1791, pp. 507-8.

99 In Bartram (*op. cit.*, pp. 507-8), the passage reads, "to their town, and they are absolved from their crimes, which are now forgotten, and they restored to favor."

100 In Bartram there follows this passage, excerpted by Thoreau: "Then the women go forth to the harvest field, and bring from thence new corn and fruits, which being prepared in the best manner, in various dishes, and drunk withal, is brought with solemnity to the square, where the people are assembled, apparelled in their new clothes and decorations. The men having regaled themselves, the remainder is carried off and distributed among the families of the town. The women and children solace themselves in their separate families and in the evening repair to the public square, where they dance, sing, and rejoice during the whole night, observing a proper and exemplary decorum, this continues three days, and the following days they receive visits, and rejoice with their friends from neighbouring towns, who have purified and preserved themselves."

101 Cf. Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Book I, chap. IV.

102, For a repetition of this idea see *Journal* entry (XVI, 145) for Oct. 29, 1857. The theory that life can be maintained through a relatively small

expenditure of physical labor is fundamental to most cooperative experiments. The 'pantisocracy' which Southey and Coleridge planned, contemplated leisure sufficient for general cultural development. So also the actual communities launched in America at Brook Farm and Fruitlands. Charles Fourier (1772-1837), author of *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements* (1808), *Traité de l'Association Domestique-Agricole* (1822), and *Le Nouveau Monde Industriel* (1829-30), was chiefly known to Americans through his American disciple, Albert Brisbane (1809-1890), who studied under Fourier from 1832 to 1834 and set himself up as his interpreter on this side of the water. Brisbane's two most important works were *Social Destiny of Man, or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* (1840), and *Association, or, A Concise Exposition of the Practical Part of Fourier's Social Science* (1843). Between 1843 and 1845 he was joint editor with Osborne Macdaniel of the *Phalanx*, "organ of the doctrine of Association." One of the terms employed in the organization of Brook Farm, *phalansteries*, was invented by Fourier to designate an industrial or producing unit of a certain size. For an interesting unfavorable reference to Fourierism on moral grounds, see Julian Hawthorne, *Hawthorne and his Wife*, Boston, 1885, I, 268-269.

Horace Greeley was interested in the establishment of "phalansteries" in 1843, "first in the Sylvan Association, somewhere in Pennsylvania, and secondly, and most of all, in a new association, to go into operation soon in New Jersey, with which he was connected" (Salt, p. 78.)

103 This whole subject of philanthropy was one on which Thoreau felt deeply, and yet one on which he was anxious not to be misunderstood. That this was true is proved by the condensation and detailed rearrangement of the original ms. (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 80-86). Further discussion of the whole question, and in particular of the difficulty of helping people in the right way, will be found in the *Journal* (VII, 211, Feb. 11, 1841). Van Doren (p. 96) suggests that "Thoreau's native hatred of philanthropy must have been materially reinforced by contact with what Orientalists today hold up to the humanitarian West as the true spirit of charity, the Oriental doctrine of cold benevolence and separation in friendship."

104 William Penn (1644-1718), founder of Pennsylvania, in the formulation of the constitution of the colony effected important improvements in the handling of crime, looking toward increased leniency.

105 John Howard (1726?-1790). As high sheriff of Bedfordshire he began to be active in the reform of prison conditions in 1773. In 1775 he systematically visited the prisons of Continental countries and in 1777 wrote *State of the Prisons in England and Wales, with Preliminary Observations, and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons*. Similar journeys to these and other countries occupied the remainder of his life, and he died of camp fever contracted on one of his errands of mercy.

106. Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) was of Quaker ancestry, the daughter of a merchant, and the wife of a merchant. Her interest in the amelioration of

prison conditions was of long standing, but dates actively from 1817, when the agitation resulted in the founding of an Association for the purpose. Beginning with Newgate, her interest broadened to include her native land, and then continental Europe, and, as she began to achieve results, her fame grew. In relieving distress she established soup kitchens and employment agencies. Her name stands next to that of Howard in English prison reform.

107 Sadi (c. 1184-1291). After a youth devoted to study, Sadi, greatest of Persian poets, set out in 1226 on a series of pilgrimages and wanderings which occupied the next thirty years. Fame came to him while he resided for a considerable time in Damascus, and then, in 1256, returned to Shiraz, his native city. His *Bustan* ("Fruit Garden") and *Gulistan* ("Rose Garden") both yield place in merit to his *Divan*, a collection of lyric poetry.

Thoreau's interest in Oriental literature, of which there is not the slightest evidence in college days, was initiated by the contact with Emerson late in 1838. This accounts for the extended references to Oriental matters in *A Week*. The gift of Oriental books from his English friend, Cholmondeley, long afterward, in 1855, merely revived this interest. In one instance in *A Week* (I, 65-68), he makes a famous comparison of Christ and Buddha, on two other occasions he compares the Hindoo scriptures with the Bible (*ibid.*, 140-150, 153-161). In the early pages of the *Journal*, in the entries for June 7 and August 6, 1841 (VII, 263, 266), he pays tribute to slow-moving Oriental religious thinking. Later, on an undetermined date (VIII, 3, 4), he compares the Hindoos and Hebrews religiously, and on August 8, 1852 (X, 289, 290), he expresses his feeling of kinship with Sadi. A late reference occurs on Jan. 24, 1856 (XIV, 135). The interest was thus no passing whim. Van Doren (pp. 52-54) points out the fact that Thoreau's indebtedness was to English editions exclusively, and (pp. 95-96) depreciates the strength of the Oriental influence, while concluding that "Thoreau took figures and sentences, not ideas, from his Oriental reading." For a full discussion see Christy's chapter on Thoreau in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism*.

108 In a letter printed in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London) for June 1, 1933, John H. Birss of New York City reports the discovery of the first five paragraphs of this chapter, printed in Sartain's *Union Magazine* for August, 1852 (XI, No. 2), at page 127, under the title, "A Poet Buying a Farm." Textual changes were made in the interval between this date and 1854, when *Walden* appeared. In the July issue there had appeared another prose piece by Thoreau, entitled "The Iron Horse," which was later incorporated in chap. IV of *Walden*.

109 *De Agri Cultura*, cap. I.

110 The original, considerably different in wording, though not in thought, is printed in the Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 37-38. A specific experience, when he spent the night in the home of a "sawmiller" on the Kauterskill mountains, August, 1844, serves as the basis for this eloquent passage. In

the original ms Thoreau says of the miller's house, "The latter was not plastered, but only lathed, and the inner doors were not hung. It was high-placed, airy and perfumed,—so high that only the winds that swept over the village of the Kauterskills (bearing the broken strains, the waifs and accompaniments of so concordant a music) passed through it."

111 This and the following sentence alone of the passage are to be found in the *Journal* (XI, 200) for May 30, 1853.

112 This boat, the Musketaquid, the joint product of the industry of John and Henry Thoreau, was the means of transportation on their trip on the Concord and Merrimack rivers, immortalized in *A Week*. Later, when Thoreau accepted a position on Staten Island, Hawthorne purchased the boat for his own use. Musketaquid was the name of the Indian settlement on the site of Concord, a fact accounting in part for the numbers of arrowheads Thoreau was continually discovering.

113 The *Harivansa* (circa 5th century A.D.), sequel to the *Mahabharata*, and, like it, a Sanskrit epic poem, is devoted largely to the life and adventures of Krishna as an incarnation of the god Vishnu. It resembles those religious manuals known as Puranas, and designed for the use of the worshippers of Vishnu, sometimes termed the divinity of the gods, and Sriva, the divinity of devils. A. Langlois translated it into French in 1834-5.

114 Thoreau gives here a clear, brief description of the location of Walden Pond.

115 Damodara is another name for Krishna, whose doings are celebrated in the *Mahabharata*.

116 Reminiscent of the opening lines of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which refer respectively to the wrath of Achilles and the wanderings of Odysseus.

117 Cf. *Walden* (II, 94) and *Journal* (XI, 200), "The morning wind forever blows," also *Walden* (II, 346-7) and *Journal* (VIII, 81), "On a bright spring morning all men's sins are forgiven." The *Journal* for April 4, 1839 (VII, 75), expresses a similar appreciation of the alluring prospects afforded by the bright atmosphere of morning. On May 24, 1851 (VIII, 213-214), he says, "My most sacred and memorable life is commonly on awaking in the morning."

118 *Vedas* the poetical devotional literature of ancient India. One of the four Vedas, the *Rig-Veda*, mentioned elsewhere in Thoreau (*Journal*, XIV, 135), contains hundreds of sacrificial hymns, often blessings and curses, arranged in ten different books, each by a different seer. Much mythological material is woven into these hymns.

119 In the ms (Bibl. Soc. ed., I, 12) the sentence and paragraph are completed thus: "when there may be no enjoyment in it. If the truth were known, they enjoy the devil a good deal more. I am not satisfied with such a lumping up and glossing over the objects of life."

120. These tiny folk of ancient legend suffered each spring an attack by the cranes. Cf. *Iliad*, III, 5.

121 A passage follows in the original ms (Bibl Soc ed, I, 45) referring with some asperity to the flood of contemporary discussion of the Fourier system, as if "it had now been in operation for a hundred years," whereas he knows of not a single institution based entirely on the plan. Thoreau doubtless wrote this before the Brook Farm experiment. At the same time, Brook Farm was by 1854 no going concern, and anyhow, even at its best, represented a considerable modification of Fourier's theories in the direction of conventionalism, especially with respect to the relations of the sexes.

122 Here the ms (Bibl Soc ed, I, 46) adds amusingly, "When I first got a cinder in my eye, I suspected that I was not going to heaven."

123 That is, ringing slowly, with a complete, or nearly complete, revolution of the bell, as compared with a rapid partial revolution.

124 The original ms adds a sentence of confession, "Though I confess that in spirit I am too often ready to admit, like the rest of mankind, that the smallest favor in either of these forms will be gratefully received." See also note 71, p. 361 preceding.

125 The persons here named appear prominently in the annals of Spain during the 'thirties and early 'forties. During the first part of the period, King Ferdinand and his brother Don Carlos were struggling for power. With the death of the king in 1839, Maria Cristina succeeded to the throne as regent. In 1841 she was temporarily replaced by General Espartero, also as regent, but in 1843 the thirteen year old Infanta was crowned Queen Isabella.

126 In the original ms, Thoreau at this point appends a footnote: "This was written before the last [1848] Revolution broke out, but a revolution in France might be expected any day, and it would be as easy to tell where it would end, before it was born, as after it was five years old." (Bibl Soc ed, I, 50.)

127 This note of courage, almost of bravado, resembles that expressed by Stevenson in "Æs Triplex."

128 Cf. "Civil Disobedience" (IV, 375, 377-379, Selections preceding, pp. 259, 260-263).

129 This paragraph is strangely reminiscent of Wordsworth's *Prelude* (Book IV, ll. 309-339), where he narrates the memorable experience which made of him "a dedicated spirit."

130 Thoreau here repeats a thought expressed previously (II, 78, Selections preceding, p. 113).

131 See *Journal* entry for Dec. 15, 1841 (VII, 296, Selections preceding, pp. 30-31).

132 As Thoreau states in an earlier journal quoted by Sanborn (Bibl Soc ed, II, 90-91), Thoreau had the normal boy's liking for a gun. It was his inheritance from pioneering days. His complete lack of anything approaching sentimentalism could not be revealed more vividly.

133 *Nun*. Error for Chaucer's monk.

134 Though no weak copy of Emerson, this passage has a common basis with his "Compensation." For both Thoreau and Emerson the laws of the Universe are just, but Thoreau went farther than Emerson in asserting their kindly aspect. In the words of Foerster (*Nature in American Literature*, p. 114), "Never was there a more convinced believer in the essential goodness of nature." This could not be, however, in so keen an observer, without the concession of her ruthlessness as regards the individual animal or plant. Thoreau had read Darwin.

135 Despite his mixed ancestry, Thoreau has been called more of a Puritan than Emerson, and this passage, with its stress upon purity and self-control, bears out the statement. Reinforced by his readings in the Oriental Scriptures and in Greek philosophy, it is here stated boldly as a rule of life. The exact demarcation between this point of view and that of Whitman might be hard to determine, but certainly Whitman has little place for chastity and suppression of the merely animal. At the same time Thoreau and Whitman share a contempt for the prudishness of the period, an admiration for the body, and, properly conceived, a respect for all of its functions. Thoreau's view of the body as ministering to the divine in man has been noted by Foerster in *Nature in American Literature*, pp. 79, 129.

136 William Kirby (1759-1850), the rector of a rural parish in England, was, with William Spence (1783-1860), the joint author of a four-volume *Introduction to Entomology* (1815-1826).

137 François Huber (1750-1831), though blind, was a great naturalist, and author of a work on bees, *Nouvelles Observations sur les abeilles* (1792), which laid the foundation for much subsequent research. His son Pierre (1777-1840) also was a scientist of note.

138 Pope Pius II (1405-1464) was pontiff from 1458-1464. He is better known as Æneas Sylvius.

139 Eugenius IV (1383-1447) was pope from 1431 to his death.

140 Olaus Magnus (1490-1558), archbishop of Upsala, was an authority on Swedish history.

141 The event referred to occurred in 1523. Christian II was at the time ruler also of Denmark and Norway.

142 Edmund Hosmer, the much prized intimate of several of the Concord intellectuals.

143 William Ellery Channing.

144 Amos Bronson Alcott was, for a time, as Thoreau suggests, a peddler. Less famous than his daughter Louisa, whose *Little Women* and sequels largely supported the family, Alcott was, nevertheless, a person of lofty, albeit impractical, idealism, and, in the field of education, a genuine innovator.

145 Cf. Luke 15:24.

146 The allusion here is to Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Book I, Hymn 88.

"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return "

147 This opening paragraph of the "Conclusion" is a condensation of an early passage in the *Journal* (VII, 129-131, March 21, 1840) For a person who traveled so little and was so conspicuously fond of his native village, Thoreau was to a high degree cosmopolitan and national in his sympathies and interests In *Walking* (V, 217) he asserts that the future of the world lies westward, and (*ibid*, 223) that Massachusetts must sympathize with the West, where reside her younger sons Indeed (*ibid*, 220), Thoreau glories in the size of the United States Following this he narrates a visit—the passage is drawn from the *Journal* for 1851 (VIII, 146-7)—to a panorama of the Mississippi River Nor was his interest in the Middle West a temporary one His last journey, undertaken May 11, 1861, in the midst of his last illness, took him through New York, Ontario, Michigan, and Illinois to the Mississippi at Dunleith, now East Dubuque, and up that stream to its headwaters, where he satisfied his lifelong passion for Indian lore by joining a party of approximately one hundred persons, including the Governor and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, bound up the St. Peter's River to the Lower Sioux Agency

148 Sir John Franklin (1786-1847) made early Arctic explorations in 1821, and in 1825-6 He set out on his final expedition, to seek out the Northwest Passage, in 1845 When last seen, near the end of July, the two ships were in Baffin Bay Relief expeditions set out in 1848 and thereafter by the score Two of these were financed by an American merchant, Henry Grinnell (1799-1874), and Grinnell Land, hitherto undiscovered, near Greenland, bears his name Important news as to the abandonment by Franklin of his ships was learned in April, 1854, the year *Walden* was published In 1859 it was definitely established that Franklin had died in June, 1847, and the last survivors of his expedition, the year following

149 Mungo Park (1771-1806) Alone, Park followed the course of the Niger River and learned much about Western Africa He was drowned on a later expedition which he had organized, when near his destination, the mouth of the river

150 Refers to the exploring expedition of the United States Navy in 1838-1842 which investigated the South Pacific and Antarctic region

151 Claudian's *De Seneca Veronensi* ends with these lines

152 Refers to the theory of Capt. John Cleves Symmes, expressed in a volume, *Theory of Concentric Spheres* (1826), that the earth is hollow and open at the poles

153 When Ædipus guessed the riddle of the Sphinx, she punished herself as she had previously punished his unsuccessful predecessors

154 This temperate statement shows Thoreau's desire to support democratic government whenever possible

155. The cabin itself had, however, been moved, even before the

publication of *Walden*, to a location several miles north, where, after serving as a granary, it eventually rotted to pieces (See Bibl Soc ed, I, xxviii, and Sanborn, *Thoreau* [1882], p 214)

156 Here, in the ms, is inserted the Wordsworthian line, "Heaven lay about him in his manhood even" (Bibl Soc ed, II, 246)

157 This transcendental view of music should be paralleled with his reference to the distant sound of the drummer (*Journal*, VII, 144-5), his comparison of the human soul to an æolian harp (*ibid*, 53, and VIII, 330), his admission (*Journal*, XIV, 347) that he is always strongly influenced by music at the end of the day, the later occasion (*Journal*, XV, 222) where he reiterates his sensitiveness, and the sound of a distant drum (*A Week*, I, 181-3) which suggests to him the supernatural character of music See also Sanborn's note (Bibl Soc ed, II, 102), and Van Doren (p 8) where he quotes Thoreau as saying music "almost tore him to pieces"

158 Kabir, a Hindu and Moslem saint of the fifteenth century, an opponent of idolatry, whose peace-loving followers worship Rama as the supreme deity

159 This and the following sentence were not in the original ms (Cf Bibl Soc ed, II, 248)

160 This bold note of Americanism and independence of European domination echoes that expressed by Emerson in his "American Scholar"

161 The Stevensonian quality of this passage is notable

162 Thoreau passed the Concord poor farm every time he walked the highway from Walden to the village

163 This line ends the octave of Blanco White's sonnet, "To Night"

164 A form of skating on thin ice

JOURNAL (1850-1859)

165 Cf *Journal* (VII, 296, Dec 15, 1841, Selections preceding, p 30) "It does seem as if mine were a peculiarly wild nature, ", "Walking" (V, 225-226, Selections preceding, p 325), where he covets for man the wildness of the antelope, *Journal* (VIII, 144, 1851), where he notes the absence of the wild strain in English literature, and in *Walden* (II, 187-190, 232), where he expresses satisfaction over his development of the wild side of his own nature As John Burroughs has remarked (*Indoor Studies*, p 11), "Thoreau was, probably, the wildest civilized man this country has produced."

166 In contrast, see *Journal* entry for July 7, 1851 (VIII, 286), where he finds the "intimations of the night divine" This fondness for morning is, however, revealed elsewhere Cf *Journal* entries for April 4, 1839 (VII, 75), and May 30, 1853 (XI, 200), and *Walden*, "The morning wind forever blows" (II, 94, Selections preceding, p 123), "Morning brings back the heroic ages" (*ibid*, 98, Selections preceding, p 126), and "In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven" (*ibid*, 346; Selections preceding, p. 161, also *Journal*, VIII, 81).

167 Cf *Journal* entry for May 24, 1851 (*ibid*, 213-14), quoted above, that for Sept 7, 1851 (*ibid*, 468-469), and *Walden* (II, 229-230, Selections preceding, p 140) In all these passages is revealed a spiritual sympathy with the Wordsworth of "Tintern Abbey," the "Ode on Intimations," and the portions of the *Prelude* dealing with his dedication as a poet of Nature

168 One of several passages in Thoreau in which is revealed a resemblance in his attitude toward Nature and in his manner of expression to Whitman, whom he was one of the first to appreciate, and bravely to befriend The tendency to apostrophe, illustrated here, is one of the characteristics of Whitman, as also the tone of the phrasing in "the naked flesh of New England, her garment being blown aside" In *Walden* (II, 243), he deplures sensuality, and mealy-mouthed prudishness of speech, thus reminding us of Whitman's own statement of his intentions in *Leaves of Grass* In a letter (VI, 295) he says, "Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience [that is, the poet, according to Thoreau, has no power to communicate his experiences], and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?" Still more strikingly Whitmanesque is that sentence in "Walking" (V, 225-6), "I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of Nature, that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence, and remind us of those parts of Nature which he most haunts"

169 The American Association for the Advancement of Science was established in 1848

170 Cf Whittier, "The Last Walk in Autumn," stanzas vii-ix, xviii Though he denied being homesick, the letters Thoreau addressed to his family and friends in 1843, when for a brief time resident at Castleton, Staten Island, as a tutor to William Emerson's children, are eloquent in the affection they express for his native town In his own phrase, "I carry Concord ground in my boots and in my hat," (to Mrs. Emerson, May 22, 1843, VI, 77) we see this truth figuratively phrased Unlike most of the other famous residents of Concord, Thoreau was a "native son," and Walden Pond was dear to him even in boyhood

171 Cf note to *A Week* (I, 277, Selections preceding, p 20) Thoreau was exacting of his friends Not only were there few acquaintances whom he would welcome on a trip through his beloved woods, but, on a spiritual plane, what he sought was a state of utter understanding and trust (*Journal*, X, 313-15, Aug 24, 1852), something unattainable on earth The present passage is only one of several in which he expresses regret over the misunderstandings, and in some cases the termination, of friendship Such are the entries for Dec 31, 1851 (IX, 167-8), June 11, 1855 (XIII, 416-17), March 28, 1856 (XIV, 230-232), and Feb 23, 1857 (XV, 276-7) Nor was Thoreau devoid of a liking for his fellow men Despite his expressed preference for solitude (*Walden*, II, 150-151), and his ability to amuse himself in the woods (*ibid*, 300, *A Week*, I, 319), he sometimes deliberately undertook to conquer inhospitality (*A Week*, I, 214-19), and acknowledges

that while living at Walden (II, 185), he made daily visits to the village for gossip. Like Emerson, he appreciated and admired the eccentric Amos Bronson Alcott. Cf. *Walden* (II, 295-7) and *Journal* for May 9 and 10, 1853 (XI, 130, 141).

Some readers have been misled by one passage (*Journal*, IX, 115, Nov. 14, 1851), in which he speaks depreciatingly of a mixed party of "thirty or forty persons, mostly young women," into the belief that he detested women. While undoubtedly bashful and inexperienced, he shows (*Journal*, VII, 292, Dec. 12, 1841) a proper romantic faith in the hidden goodness of all young women, based on acquaintance with one, and in the *Journal* entry for April 23, 1857 (XV, 336), writes appreciatively of a young woman who has shown a passionate love of Nature. It is true that he had no time for Nineteenth Century prudishness (*Journal*, IX, 258, Jan. 31, 1852), and credited women with a larger share of instinct than men (*Journal*, VIII, 116, Nov. 28, 1850), but he regarded them nevertheless in a very elevated way. He would not tolerate vulgarity in the discussion of the subject of sex (*Journal*, IX, 406-407, April 12, 1852), and suggests (*Journal*, VIII, 185, April 29, 1851) some relation of men to women transcending marriage. Love is, he says (*Journal*, VII, 329, March 14, 1842), tainted by contact with any third party. It demands a bravery and venturesomeness not often encountered, either in man or woman.

THOMAS CARLYLE AND HIS WORKS

172 The text of the essay as originally printed in *Graham's Magazine*, XXX, 145 and 238, March and April, 1847, and exactly reproduced in the following excerpt, is marred by an exceptional number of typographical errors, most of them easily recognizable: *mouth to mouth* for *month to month*, *Boons* for *Boones*, *Croquets* for *Crocketts*, *Landon* for *Landon*. It was later reprinted by Ticknor and Fields in 1866 in the volume entitled, *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*. The essay was written during his residence at Walden Pond, 1845-1847.

173 The above paragraph omitted from the essay as reprinted after Thoreau's final revision (IV, 333-334).

174 This and the two following sentences omitted from Thoreau's final version (IV, 336).

175 Beginning with this sentence, the remainder of the paragraph omitted from the final version (IV, 338).

176 This and the following sentence, and the last two sentences of the paragraph, omitted from final version (IV, 339).

177 Beginning with this sentence, the remainder of the paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 340).

178 Beginning with this sentence, the remainder of the paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 340).

179 Beginning with this sentence, the remainder of the paragraph,

and the whole of the three following paragraphs omitted from final version (IV, 340)

180 A section of London on the north bank of the Thames, and a considerable distance above the Houses of Parliament Here Thomas Carlyle resided at No 5, Cheyne Row, from 1834 until his death in 1881

181 This and the following sentence omitted from final version (IV, 341)

182 Omitted from final version (IV, 342)

183 This and the following three sentences omitted from final version (IV, 342)

184 Thoreau's criticism of Carlyle's historical method is much more commonly heeded today by historians than formerly It is now agreed that wars and state affairs must not be stressed to the disregard of matters really more important, and the picture of many-sided life which Thoreau suggested is now at least approximated

185 This sentence and the two following sentences omitted from final version (IV, 343)

186 This sentence and the two following sentences omitted from final version (IV, 344)

187 Omitted from final version (IV, 344)

188 This sentence and the two following sentences omitted from final version (IV, 345)

189 Omitted from final version (IV, 345)

190 This and the following sentence omitted from final version (IV, 346)

191 Beginning with this sentence, remainder of paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 346)

192 Omitted from final version (IV, 346)

193 From semi-colon to end, omitted from final version (IV, 347)
The three following sentences are combined into one

194 Beginning with this sentence, remainder of paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 348)

195 Beginning with this sentence, the remainder of this paragraph, and the first two sentences of that following are omitted from final version (IV, 349)

196 This and the three following sentences omitted from final version (IV, 349)

197 This sentence, the remainder of the paragraph, and the four complete paragraphs following omitted from final version (IV, 350)

198 This paragraph omitted from final version (IV, 351)

199 This sentence, together with the remainder of the paragraph, omitted from final version (IV, 353)

THE MAINE WOODS

200 The first appearance of *The Maine Woods* as a book was when published in 1864 at Boston by Ticknor and Fields, after the death of Thoreau. The first two of the three papers had, however, appeared separately during Thoreau's lifetime: the first, "Ktaadn," in the *Union Magazine*, III, Nos. 1-5, in 1848, the second, "Chesuncook," from which this excerpt is taken, in 1858 in the *Atlantic Monthly*, II, Nos. 1-3. The portions reprinted will be found in the June and July numbers, pp. 8-12, 224-230. The three trips to Maine on which these articles were based, were undertaken in 1846, 1853, and 1857 respectively.

201 This is not the well remembered Joe Polis, who accompanied Thoreau on the third Maine trip, recorded in "The Allegash and East Branch," but a less valued guide, Joe Atteon.

202 Every biographer and almost every other writer on Thoreau has commented on the extraordinary fascination exercised over him by Indians and Indian life. In his library were more than a score of volumes dealing with the tribes of North America. He had also a passion for collecting arrowheads and seems to have been able to pick them up almost anywhere at will. Joe Polis, his guide on a later expedition, commanded almost as much of his attention as the wilderness itself. The information which he gathered from these personal contacts and from his reading, Thoreau contemplated using, had he lived, in a later work.

Speaking of "the extracts he has left on the history of the Indians," Channing says (p. 248), "These books, forming a little library of themselves, consist of such extracts from all the writers on the Indians, all the world over, as would have value and advantages for him. He read the long and painful series of Jesuit Relations, by the Canadian originals,—the early works in American history at Harvard College, collected, compared, and copied the early maps, early figures of the Indians (such as those of De Bry), read all the travels which he could procure, and carefully excerpted all facts bearing on the subject of Indians, yet this vast labor and expense and toil,—far more than most literary men willingly undergo in their lives,—were but the pursuit of a collateral topic."

Regarding Thoreau's view of the Indian, George William Curtis says (*From the Easy Chair*, p. 65), "It was untouched by romance or sentimentality. It made them a grave, manly race, intimately familiar with nature, with a lofty scorn of feebleness. The sylvan shade and the leafy realm and Arden and pastoral poetry were wholly wanting in the picture he drew, quite as much as the theory that they are vermin to be exterminated as fast as possible."

203 The bracketed sentence, contained in the original manuscript, was omitted in the *Atlantic* printing without the consent of the author, but at the instruction of the editor of the magazine, James Russell Lowell, who had no extravagant opinion of Thoreau's genius, and seems to have

regarded the phrase as fantastic. His action exasperated Thoreau, who would have nothing more to do with the magazine until James T. Fields had replaced Lowell as editor. Thoreau's last literary activity was the preparation of papers for the *Atlantic*, not published, however, until after his death.

204 From "Chesuncook"

CAPE COD

205 *Cape Cod* was first published complete by Ticknor and Fields at Boston in 1865. Chapters 1-14 had appeared in 1855 in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, the first two in June, the remainder in July. Chapter v, "The Wellfleet Oysterman," was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (XIV, 470) for October, 1864. Chapter viii, "The Highland Light," appeared in the same magazine for December, 1864, p. 649.

206 *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, V, 635 (June, 1855)

This passage seems to express a reasonable sympathy with the conventional religious belief in immortality. For a contrary interpretation of his attitude see Van Doren, p. 117. Adams ("Thoreau and Immortality") finds in some miscellaneous manuscript material in the Harvard Library "an essay on death and graveyards and immortality, a probable product of Thoreau's reading of Sir Thomas Browne." He cites passages (VII, 176, 324) to support the idea of some belief in immortality on Thoreau's part.

207 *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, VI, 66 (July, 1855)

208 The text of this and the following passage is that of the Ticknor and Fields edition, pp. 110, 172-173. One cannot avoid comment on the broadly national interest here revealed, especially as regards the references to California. Twenty years had elapsed since the visit of Richard Henry Dana to that western coast as recorded in *Two Years before the Mast*, and, with the Gold Rush and the war with Mexico, California had become better known along the Atlantic seaboard.

209 The Reverend William Gilpin (1724-1804), author of several works descriptive of the landscape in various sections of England, Scotland, and Wales. He is several times mentioned by Thoreau in his printed works, and is specially recommended in his correspondence (See VI, 239, 263-4). For a discussion of the whole question of Gilpin's influence on Thoreau, consult Templeman, "Thoreau, Moralizer of the Picturesque."

210 Friedrich Heinrich Alexander, Baron von Humboldt (1769-1859), was a distinguished scientist whose achievements in various fields brought him unexampled renown. Between 1799 and 1804 he was engaged in important explorations in South and Central America and the West Indies. One of the fruits was his *Examen Critique de l'Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent*, Paris, 1836.

211 Herrera de Tordesillas, author of *Historia de las Indias Occidentales*, 1601.

212 George, Lord Anson (1697-1762), a famous British explorer and naval commander, was for several years previous to 1735 stationed in the vicinity of the Carolina coast. A subsequent voyage across the Pacific is recounted in a volume, *Lord Anson's Voyage Round the World*, for which he furnished the materials.

A YANKEE IN CANADA

213 The two excerpts from *A Yankee in Canada* here reprinted follow the text of the original printing in the January and February issues, pages 57 and 183 respectively, of Vol. I (1853), *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*. A disagreement between the editor, George William Curtis, and the author as to the former's right to omit what he considered objectionable passages from articles unsigned as these were, resulted in Thoreau's withholding the last two chapters after the third had appeared in the March issue.

214 Thoreau's sympathetic appreciation of a religion so different from that in which he had been reared, may be paralleled by the reaction of Emerson to a Roman Catholic service in the cathedral in Baltimore "which gave him a sudden aversion for 'Unitarians and Martin Luther and all the parliament of Barebones'" (Phillips Russell, *Emerson, the Wisest American*, New York, 1929, p. 224). Cf. also Emerson's poem, "The Problem."

RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT

215 The essay is here printed as it first appeared in the *Aesthetic Papers* of Elizabeth P. Peabody, Boston, 1849, p. 189. The original title, as here printed, was later altered to "Civil Disobedience."

216 This doctrine is, of course, nothing new under the sun, even in America. The Hamiltonian party in the Constitutional Convention were far from believing that the majority is always right, and the fact that so large a part of our governmental problems are so determined is simply the result of compromise with the Jeffersonian party. Nor is Thoreau without abundant support today. All minority parties are organized from those who believe the majority wrong. The principle of control by a majority is simply, as Thoreau says, one of expediency.

217 Charles Wolfe's *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, from which this stanza is taken, was one of Thoreau's favorite poems, which he often repeated aloud or sang in a musical arrangement.

218 The Mexican War was unpopular in New England, then a stronghold of Whiggism as well as of the rapidly growing Free Soil sentiment. The struggle was generally regarded as an enterprise of the Democratic party, aimed at increasing slave territory. Of this dissatisfaction, Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (First Series) is perhaps the outstanding literary product.

219 It is almost superfluous to point out that beyond granting to minorities the privilege of free speech, free assemblage, and orderly

agitation, the organized state cannot go. How it shall determine which are "wise minorities" Thoreau does not suggest.

220 The acknowledged indebtedness of Mahatma Gandhi to the teachings of Thoreau is intelligible when one realizes that the doctrine of "passive resistance" is here definitely suggested. See Introduction, note 41.

221 This seems a clear allusion to the unfortunate circumstances attendant upon the visit of Samuel Hoar to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1844, and his immediate expulsion by action of the legislature and a committee of leading citizens. Hoar, a resident of Concord since 1805, and an eminent lawyer, had been sent by the governor of Massachusetts to initiate a test, before a higher court, of the constitutionality of South Carolina laws permitting the imprisonment and sale as slaves of Massachusetts Negroes, seamen on boats touching at Carolina ports. Though Hoar escaped without physical violence, the harsh treatment he received roused great indignation in Massachusetts.

222 Amos Bronson Alcott had subjected himself to the same experience and for a like reason in 1843, two years before Thoreau. His refusal to pay even a poll tax to a government which permitted slavery to exist has, however, attracted less attention. Sanborn says Alcott and Thoreau were arrested by the same constable and occupied the same cell (*Bibl. Soc. ed.*, II, 29).

223 The frequently repeated assertion that it was Emerson who paid Thoreau's tax seems as apocryphal as the story of the dialogue between the two before Thoreau's release.

"Henry, why are you here?"

"Waldo, why are you not here?"

Thoreau's aunts, according to family testimony, made up the sum

SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS

224 The text here reproduced is that of its first printed appearance in the *Liberator*, July 21, 1854. The address was delivered on the Fourth of July preceding, before the Anti-Slavery Convention at Frammingham, Massachusetts.

225 The Nebraska bill passed May 22, 1854, after a brilliant debate and a close vote, dividing the Whig party on sectional lines. Generally regarded as a violation of the Missouri Compromise, and by some of the more excitable as the first of a series of measures of slave-holding origin, aiming at the annexation of Cuba and most of Mexico, it created much excitement. W. L. Garrison's editorial in the *Liberator* for May 26 ends with the characteristic sentence, "A thousand times accursed be the Union which has made this possible."

226 On May 24, U. S. Commissioner Edward G. Loring ordered the arrest of Anthony Burns, alleged runaway slave of a Virginia merchant. His trial was set for the 27th. On the 26th a great meeting of protest was

held at Faneuil Hall, at which Theodore Parker and Wendell Phillips spoke. A riot followed outside the Court House. On June 2 the commissioner gave his decision ordering Burns sent back to Virginia. The order was carried out and Burns returned with his master to his native state.

227 George S. Boutwell was governor from 1851 to 1853, John H. Clifford was succeeded in 1854 by Emory Washburn. The first was a Democrat-Free-Soiler, the last two were Whigs. Presumably Thoreau was satisfied with none of them.

228 Thomas M. Sims was a Georgia slave who in February, 1851, fled to Boston. A few months later he was apprehended, tried, and returned to his master at Savannah. His last years were spent at Washington as a messenger in the Department of Justice.

A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

229 The text here reprinted is that of the first edition, as included in James Redpath's *Echoes of Harper's Ferry*, Boston, 1860. Thoreau first delivered the address at the Concord Town Hall, Sunday evening, Oct. 30, 1859. On the following Tuesday he delivered it at Tremont Temple, Boston. As is generally known, Thoreau himself made the advance announcement of the time, place, and topic of his address.

230 This striking use of the word *transcendentalist* shows the difficulties confronting anyone attempting to define the term. In the popular mind associated with unintelligible, dreamy philosophy and poetry, it is here applied to a hard-fisted, uncultivated man of action. And yet Brown was at bottom a mystic and a visionary, whose chief distinction lay in his fanatical determination to put his ideals uncompromisingly into practice.

231. John Brown was executed Dec. 2, 1859. Memorial services were held that day at Concord. The brief remarks of Thoreau, *After the Death of John Brown*, are reprinted in the Walden Edition, IV, 451-454. He was also author of *The Last Days of John Brown*, read by the Secretary at a memorial meeting at North Elba, New York, July 4, 1860, first printed in the *Liberator*, July 27, 1860. John Brown had at one time resided for two years at North Elba, where a community of Negroes had recently been formed, and when, in 1855, he joined five of his sons (he had twenty children) in Kansas, he left the remainder of his family at North Elba.

232 The possibility that Brown was of definitely unbalanced mind need not be argued here, but is certainly increased by the presence of an undoubted inheritance of unfavorable character. As Allen Johnson points out in the new *Dictionary of American Biography* (III, 131), Brown's mother was insane for a number of years before her death, his maternal grandmother was insane, his mother's sister died insane, three sons of one of her brothers were in asylums, two sons of another brother were insane. Although the fact has nothing to do with his own case, it is true that John Brown's first wife went insane and that two of their seven children were

unbalanced "Before his execution seventeen affidavits from neighbors and relatives who believed Brown to be insane were sent to Gov Wise. "

WALKING

233 This essay was among the pieces which Thoreau prepared for publication immediately before his death, though sections appear in the *Journal* for the years 1850-1852. It was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1862 (IX, 657). The text is here reprinted in its original form.

POEMS

234 First printed in the *Dial*, III, No. 4, April, 1843.

235 First printed in the *Dial*, III, No. 2, October, 1842, *Walden Ed.*, I, 184.

236 First printed in the *Dial*, III, No. 2, October, 1842. Reprinted in part in *A Week*, "Sunday", in full, *Walden Ed.*, V, 400.

237 First printed in the *Dial*, I, No. 1, July, 1840, later in *Journal*, VII, 80, and in *A Week*, "Wednesday". See note 57 preceding. According to T. M. Raysor, "The Love Story of Thoreau," this poem was not occasioned by Thoreau's love for Ellen Sewall, as often asserted.

238 First printed in the *Dial*, III, No. 2, October, 1842. Reprinted in the *Journal*, VII, 291-292, and *A Week*, "Wednesday".

239 First printed in the *Dial*, III, No. 2, October, 1842. Reprinted in *A Week*, "Thursday".

240 First printed in an article by Emerson entitled "Prayers" and published in the *Dial*, III, No. 1, July, 1842. Various reprints. *Walden Ed.*, V, 418.